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*for the*  
MILLIONS

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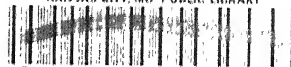
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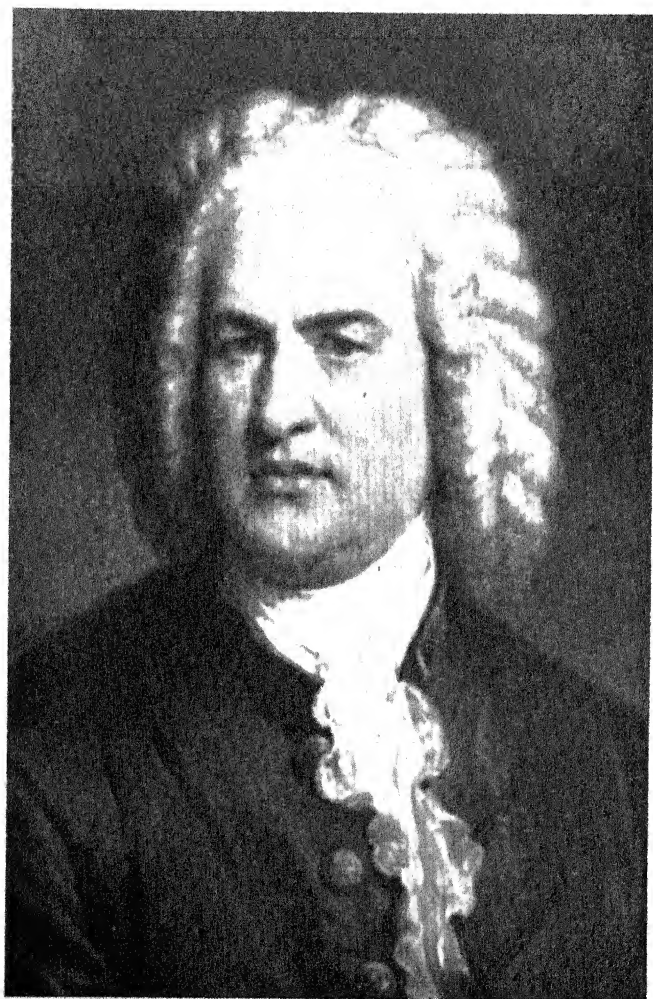
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# *P*ORTRAITS





BACH



HAYDN



MOZART



*(Joseph Paterson)*

BEETHOVEN





*(Edwin F. Kalmas)*

MENDELSSOHN

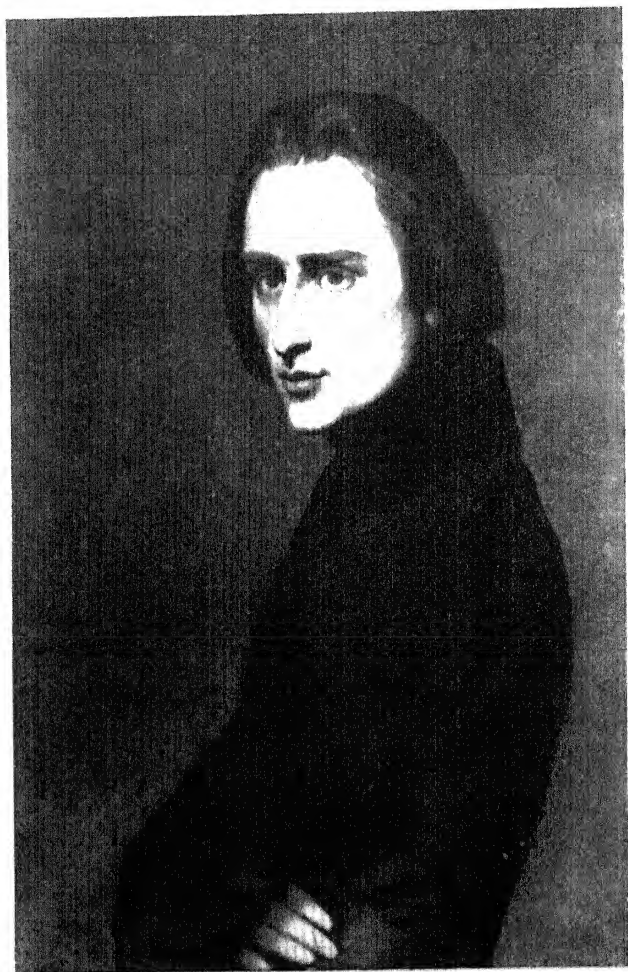


*(Edwin F. Kalmus)*

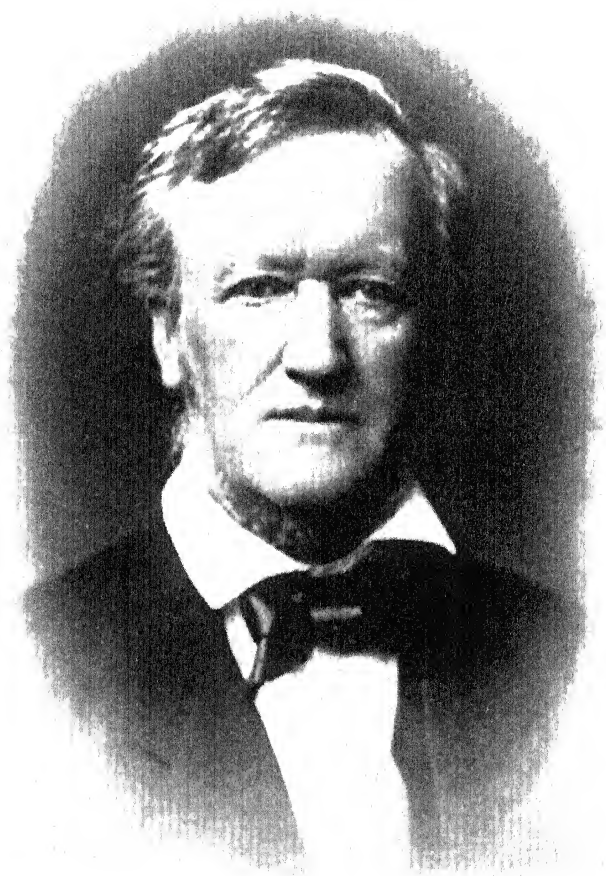
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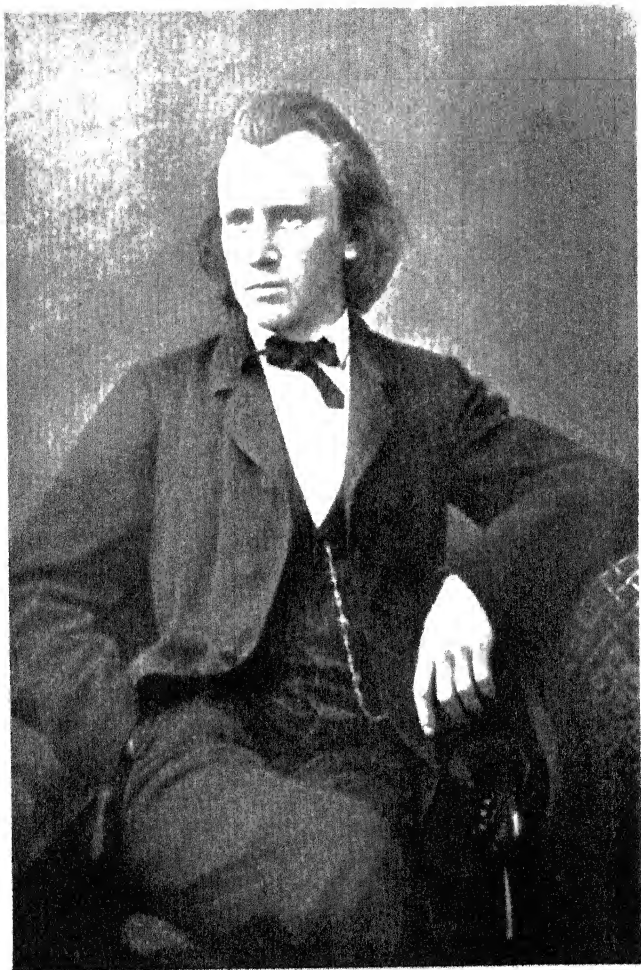
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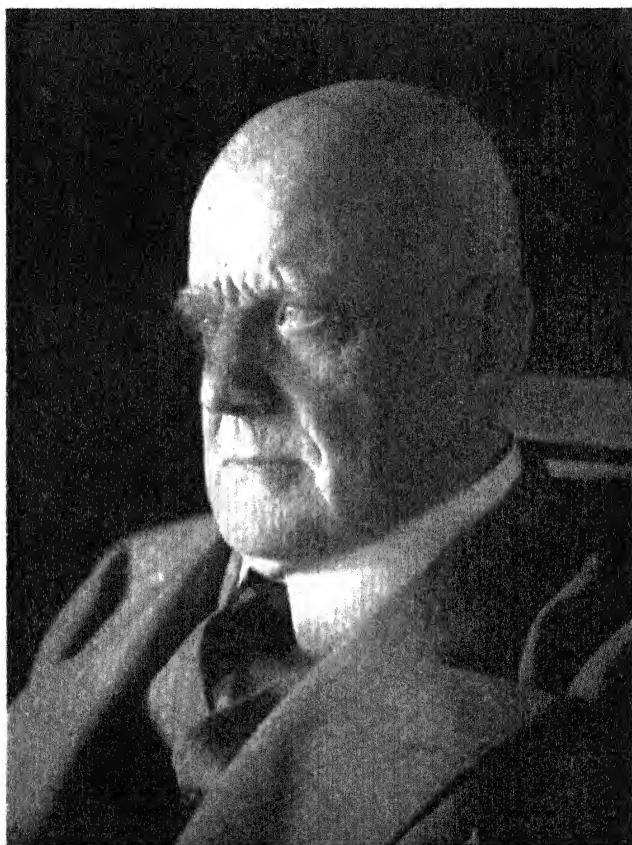


BRAHMS

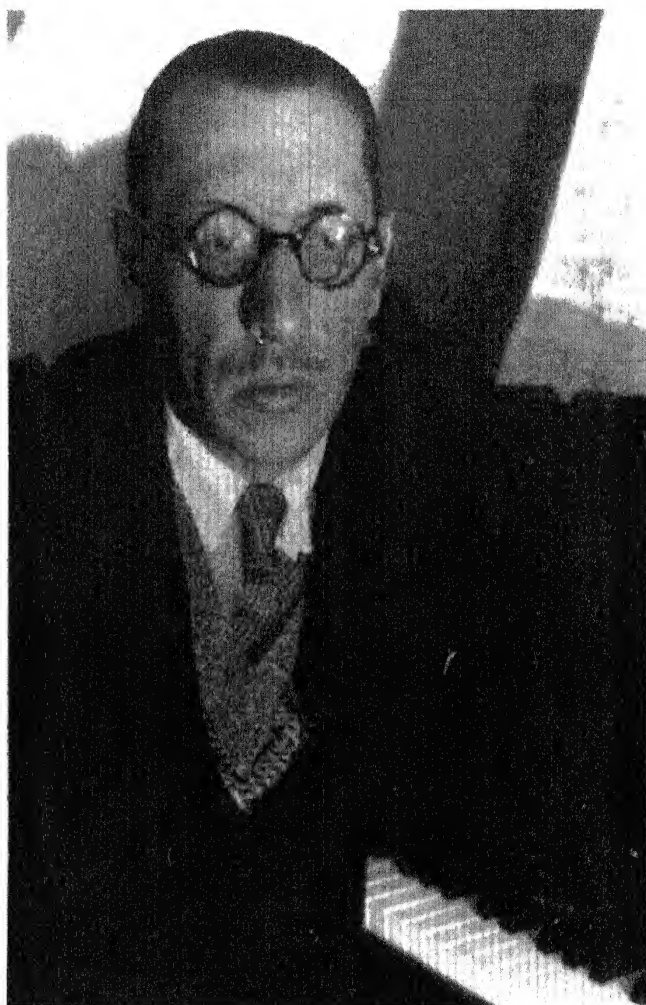


TCHAIKOVSKY





SIBELIUS



STRAVINSKY

# MUSIC for the MILLIONS

*The Encyclopedia of Musical Masterpieces*

BOOKS BY DAVID EWEN

THE UNFINISHED SYMPHONY

FROM BACH TO STRAVINSKY

WINE, WOMEN AND WALTZ

THE MAN WITH THE BATON

COMPOSERS OF TODAY

HEBREW MUSIC

COMPOSERS OF YESTERDAY

TWENTIETH CENTURY COMPOSERS

MUSICAL VIENNA

*(in collaboration with Dr. Frederic Ewen)*

MEN AND WOMEN WHO MAKE MUSIC

PIONEERS IN MUSIC

LIVING MUSICIANS

MUSIC COMES TO AMERICA

THE BOOK OF MODERN COMPOSERS

DICTATORS OF THE BATON

THE STORY OF GEORGE GERSHWIN

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MUSIC  
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MILLIONS

*The Encyclopedia of  
Musical Masterpieces*

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*To H. G. K.*





# PREFACE

ALTHOUGH there are in existence for the layman's use many admirable guides to the symphony and the opera, *Music for the Millions* is the first book in English (and the first one-volume work in any language) to deal with all forms of musical masterpieces. For one outstanding reason the need for such a book has long been evident.

No longer is the concert-goer or the radio listener compelled to subsist on a musical diet composed exclusively of symphonies and operas—and those perhaps over-familiar to him already. The missionary work done by the radio and the phonograph has now brought the entire world of music to his ears and his mind: not only symphonies and operas, but also choral works, chamber music, songs, sonatas, suites, instrumental pieces of all kinds. But today's music lover, eager to learn something about one of these—a noble piano sonata or string quartet of Beethoven, a Mozart concerto, one of Schumann's fine piano works, a Bach chorale, or a song cycle by Schubert—is not likely to find such information readily accessible; to get it, he must have the leisure and the pertinacity to search for it in some large library.

Here, then, was an imperative need: to provide in one convenient volume, efficiently planned and systematically arranged, a body of useful and interesting material, both programmatic and analytical (though non-technical), on masterpieces in every field of music.

The author has naturally found this a herculean task; but he has found it a pleasant one as well, since it carries out a project he has long had in mind. Research for it started officially in 1938, but the actual plans and the preliminary approaches to the project date from many years before that—from the time when he heard his first concerts, read his first music books, made his first notes, wrote his first criticisms, and did his first piece of research. *Music for the Millions* is thus the fruit of some fifteen years of his experience as a writer on music.

Although the book is made up chiefly of concise and informative discussions of many thousands of musical works, its scheme is such as to provide the layman with far more than mere "program notes." Here is that scheme:

The sections, arranged alphabetically by composers from Albéniz to Wolf-Ferrari, include virtually all the great men in music up to our own day. Each section starts with a short biographical sketch of the composer, followed by a survey of his place in music and a list of his principal works. Each section is divided, from this point on, among the several musical forms in which he wrote; each of the compositions dealt with is treated with some

fullness, and material is also provided on the origin and evolution of the forms themselves and on the ways in which they were enriched by this composer's work. (An outline "Bird's-eye View of Musical History" will be found in Appendix I). Finally, each section contains programmatic information on the composer's most frequently heard compositions in these forms.

One of the more formidable problems faced by the author in preparing the book was naturally that of selection. In a single volume, it would obviously be impossible to discuss every important work by every composer. The plan ultimately decided upon was as follows. The general aim has been to include all the representative composers of whatever period, and most of the representative works in the concert repertory. In some cases, works are treated collectively: the Opus 18 Quartets of Beethoven, for example. With certain composers—Sibelius and Shostakovich, for example—only the more frequently heard symphonies are treated. On the other hand, it has been found desirable to include a number of composers whose work is rarely heard today but whose influence on the history of music was so decisive that every music lover will wish to know something about them: Monteverdi, Dufay, Orlando di Lasso, and Stamitz, for instance. Yet another inclusion which the reader will undoubtedly find helpful is the brief plot-outline of every opera discussed.

For every work treated, a recommended recording is named; domestic records only, such as are now available in the shops, being included. Where more than one domestic issue of a work exists, the author has selected the one he considers most desirable in point of performance and recording.

The author is profoundly indebted to both the Victor and the Columbia companies for placing at his disposal every available recording for analysis and study. He has thus been able, conveniently and at home, to refer to the music itself as he wrote about it—an advantage that he has fully appreciated. He is grateful also to Mr. Nicolas Slonimsky for reading the galley proofs of the book and making numerous valuable corrections and suggestions.

# MUSIC for the MILLIONS

*The Encyclopedia of Musical Masterpieces*



# ALBÉNIZ

ISAAC ALBÉNIZ, Spanish nationalist composer, b. Camprodón, in the province of Gerona, 1860. Studied at the Madrid Conservatory, in Leipzig (with Jadassohn and Reinecke), and in Brussels (with Gevaert). Originally a concert pianist and a composer of hack works, he was given direction and purpose by Felipe Pedrell, father of Spanish nationalist music. Pedrell inspired Albéniz to turn to serious composition; more than that, he imbued Albéniz with the mission of writing Spanish music. Settling in Paris, Albéniz devoted himself to creative work. In 1900, illness brought him back to his native land, and he died in Cambo in 1909.

ALBÉNIZ's importance in music lies in the fact that he put into practice Pedrell's theory—namely, that a great Spanish musical art could be built on the foundation of the Spanish folk song. Albéniz borrowed melodic material from native folk music, and used its modes and rhythms in fashioning his own melodies. Besides adopting technical features of indigenous Spanish music, he saturated his works with the color, the atmosphere, of Spain; they suggest to us the hot blood of the gypsy, the brilliance of the Spanish sun, the sinuous movement of the Spanish dance. From his music comes also the scent of the Orient—perceptible in his richly ornamented melodies and luscious harmonizations. His success in writing Spanish music contributed toward establishing a school of Spanish composers who were inspired by him—men like Granados, Turina, and Manuel de Falla.

## PIANO MUSIC

Though Albéniz composed operas (of which *Pepita Jiménez* is the most notable), he is known today almost exclusively for his piano music. Having recognized only belatedly where his true strength lay, he died lamenting that he had spent so much of his time in the writing of operas, and so little in the creation of Spanish music for the piano. Himself an expert pianist, a one-time pupil of Franz Liszt, he wrote with extraordinary effectiveness for the keyboard, his forte being color in endless variety.

His best works for the piano include *Catalonia* (which he himself later orchestrated), the *Suite Española*, the *Cantos de España* (which contains that exquisite nocturne *Córdoba*), and the *Tango in D* (best known in the effective transcription by Leopold Godowsky). But his masterpiece was *Iberia*, and it is because of *Iberia* that he has earned an honored place among the great composers.

*Iberia*

*Iberia* was composed in 1904, during the winter of Albéniz's life: he was ill, his daughter had died, his wife was in great pain. However, despite his depressed spirits, the music written during this period was the happiest realization of his art, its brilliance rarely betraying the composer's mood. It is interesting to note, in passing, that Albéniz was tempted to destroy the manuscript because he considered the work so complex technically that he feared no pianist in the world could perform it!

*Iberia* comprises four books, or twelve pieces:

Book I: "*Evocación*"; "*El Puerto*"; "*El Corpus en Sevilla*" (or "*Fête-Dieu à Seville*").

Book II: "*Rondeña*"; "*Almería*"; "*Triana*."

Book III: "*El Albaicín*"; "*El Polo*"; "*Lavapiés*."

Book IV: "*Málaga*"; "*Jérez*"; "*Eritaña*."

Through the subtlest use of a rhythmic, a harmonic, or a melodic phrase, or through an apt quotation from Andalusian folklore, Albéniz has skilfully given musical description to a variety of Spanish scenes and experiences, suggesting infinite nuances of atmosphere. The Spanish background is obviously recognizable in this music, even if we did not know the titles. As Georges Jean-Aubry writes: "Albéniz has all the power of the poet—ease and richness of style, beauty and originality of imagery, and a rare sense of suggestion."

The same critic analyzes this work as follows: "A list of the themes alone of *Iberia* would suffice to show their richness in melody and variety of their rhythm. But more wonderful than the beauty of the themes is their suppleness and fluidity; their languorous intonation, or their heat and energy. That in which Albéniz is inimitable is the atmosphere he creates around a theme, the scenery with which he surrounds the 'melodic personage'—a word, a song, or a murmured confession. The method of Albéniz, if one can use such a word with regard to him, is almost inscrutable. It obeys only subtle and personal laws. An expressive counterpoint, always ductile and full of movement, supports his themes, plays with them or crosses them. The parts seem at times inextricably intermingled, and suddenly all is again resolved in lucidity."

The Spanish conductor Enrique Fernández Arbós has orchestrated *Iberia*. The "*El Corpus en Sevilla*" section (often referred to by its French title, "*Fête-Dieu à Seville*") has become famous on orchestral programs through transcriptions by Fernández Arbós and Leopold Stokowski.

Recommended recordings: "*Evocación*," "*El Puerto*," "*El Corpus en Sevilla*," "*Triana*," orchestrated by Fernández Arbós, CM-130 (Madrid Symphony—Arbós); "*Evocación*," and "*Triana*," original piano version, C-71171D (Novaes); "*El Corpus en Sevilla*," orchestrated by Stokowski, V-7158 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

# ARENSKY

ANTON ARENSKY, b. Nijni-Novgorod, 1861. Attended the St. Petersburg Conservatory where he was a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov. After graduating he made his home in Moscow, where he became professor of counterpoint at the Conservatory. In 1895, he was made director of the Imperial Choir. His health undermined by hard work and dissipation, he was confined to a sanitarium in Terioki, Finland, where he died in 1906.

A MINOR composer who made no pretense at essaying vast artistic projects or At plumbing great emotional depths, Arensky had a pleasing style that affords pleasure to the listener even if it does not stir him profoundly. Greatly influenced by Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov, he frequently loses his own identity in his imitation of the styles of these masters. But he had a gift for melody, an easy fluidity of style, and a suave workmanship which brought grace and charm to his best works.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

Arensky is not in his element in writing for the symphony orchestra. Though he produced two symphonies, a concerto for piano and orchestra, a concerto for violin and orchestra, and a *Fantasia on Russian Folk Songs*, only one work has won a permanent place in the symphonic repertory: *Variations on a Theme of Tchaikovsky*. In his symphonies, he was too much the disciple of Tchaikovsky to liberate himself from constricting derivative influences.

### *Variations on a Theme of Tchaikovsky*

It is appropriate that Arensky's best orchestral work—the *Variations in E minor*, Op. 54, No. 5, for strings—should have been written not only on a Tchaikovsky theme but consciously in the Tchaikovsky style as well. Indeed, the work was written as a tribute to the composer Arensky so greatly admired; and the seventh variation is directly modeled on the Andante Cantabile from Tchaikovsky's D major Quartet. But the composition cannot by any means be mistaken for Tchaikovsky; it has neither the breadth nor the deep feeling of the master.

The theme is taken from one of the Children's Songs by Tchaikovsky, Op. 54, entitled "In the Garden of the Infant Christ"—a theme that must have been a particular favorite of Arensky's, for he had already used it as the slow movement in his string quartet, Op. 35.

The Variations are not marked by any extraordinary imagination in developing and changing the principal theme. Arensky's variation method consists usually in distributing the voices conventionally among the various choirs of the orchestra; or in assigning the subject to one group of instruments against embellishing arpeggios, runs, or counter-themes in another

bidding. In a sense his work is final and isolated. His work stands alone as the summing-up of a long period of preparation; and the summing-up in his characteristically Teutonic direction seemed so complete that nothing remained to be said in the lines which he had illustrated."

J. S. Bach wrote a library of music as incomparable for its extensiveness as for its artistic merit. On the hundredth anniversary of his death—in 1850—a complete critical edition of his works was undertaken by the Bach Gesellschaft, and more than ten editors labored for fifty years to collate everything Bach had written. Early in 1900 the fruit of this enterprise was published in an edition of some sixty volumes, which comprised music in every form known at that time and in practically every field of musical writing (except opera). The volumes proved to be an inexhaustibly rich mine, since whatever the form and the manner in which Bach expressed himself, his work is generally infused with nobility, originality, and lofty thinking.

It is indeed curious that this uniquely productive genius, who wrote so much that was touched with immortality, should have been neglected for almost a century following his death. When during the years after 1750 the name Bach was mentioned it was always one of his sons who was meant—Johann Christian (the "London" Bach), or Karl Philipp Emanuel. It was to a mere handful of persons that Johann Sebastian was known, and these thought of him as a great organist rather than as a composer.

One reason for this sudden and complete neglect of Bach after his death was that music, in the mid-eighteenth century, passed from polyphony to homophony—from the writing of "many-voiced" compositions to music consisting of a single melodic line with accompaniment. In Bach's generation, it was believed that with this change, Bach must have passed into obsolescence. Whatever the explanation, his eclipse was complete. A bundle of Bach cantatas sold for \$40 soon after his death, and other manuscripts were disposed of by his sons for about ten cents each. The manuscripts of his solo sonatas were discovered on their way to a butcher shop to be used as wrapping paper. And his music remained virtually unperformed for some eighty years.

The rediscovery of Bach began in 1802, when the German musicologist Forkel published an adulatory biography. "This sublime genius," wrote Forkel, "this prince of musicians, German or foreign, dwarfs all others from the heights of superiority." Then, in 1829, the youthful Felix Mendelssohn (he was only twenty) conducted a Berlin performance of the *Passion According to St. Matthew*. Not since Bach's own day, and nowhere but in Bach's own Leipzig church, had this mighty work been heard, and for the first time since his death the music world was made aware of the majesty of his genius. In 1833 a performance of the *St. John Passion* heightened this awareness. And with the launching in 1850 of the complete edition of Bach's works, music-lovers were gradually to arrive at a full appreciation of Bach's contribution to music.



## CANTATAS

## Church Cantatas

Bach wrote several hundred Church Cantatas, the form being the German motet treated in Italian style; indeed, Bach called his first Cantatas motets. (The motet is a religious work usually for unaccompanied voices.) Consisting of music for voice and orchestra in about six movements, usually ending with a chorale, and requiring about half an hour for performance, the Church Cantata was part of the Lutheran service on Sundays and certain festival days.

The Church Cantata reached its highest point with Bach, having until his time been in a formative stage. It had originally been devised by the Roman organist Carissimi (1605-74), who realized that certain churches had no adequate facilities for presenting his elaborate oratorios. His new form was therefore more intimate and less pretentious. With Buxtehude (1637-1707) the Church Cantata attained new dimensions, and was now ready for Bach to carry further. Although after Bach's death it passed out of general use among composers, with Bach it became an artistic form yielding music wonderful for its devout feeling.

In Bach's hands, as Terry wrote, the Church Cantata reveals "the devotionism Bach professed and practised. It can be defined in a word as Pietism or mystic. The Cradle at Bethlehem and the Cross at Calvary were its most vivid visions. They inspired in him an intense, almost feminine, devotion to the personality of Jesus, whose sacred name in his texts never failed to draw from him a gesture of adoring affection. . . . Apart from their musicianship, the cantatas reveal Bach as a man singularly pondering, emotional, and above all controlled by a religious sense as profound as it was simple."

It cannot be said that Bach's contemporaries or immediate successors appreciated the originality and grandeur of these cantatas. Adam Hiller (1728-1804) criticized their "crudities," while Doles (Bach's pupil) considered their music poorly adapted for the Church! Yet it is largely owing to Bach, and to the genius he brought to it, that the Church Cantata has not been relegated to oblivion.

It is no simple task to select, out of this remarkable repertory, a few works that are most characteristic. But the Church Cantatas most often heard include the following:

*Christ lag in Todesbanden*: Bach Gesellschaft Edition, No. 4. (Recommended recording: VM-120, Orfeo Catalá and Orchestra—Millet.)

*Herz und Mund*: B.G.E., No. 147. This contains the famous chorale so well known in transcription for piano and orchestra, "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring." (For recordings of "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" see Transcriptions.)

*Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde*: B.G.E., No. 53. In one movement

only, this is a poignant aria for contralto and orchestra, with effective use of bells in the accompaniment.

*Wachet auf:* B.G.E., No. 140. One of the most eloquent of all Bach cantatas. (Recommended recording: VM-120, Orfeo Catalá and Orchestra—Millet.)

### Secular Cantatas

In his secular cantatas we find Bach in a less familiar mood: not the devout cantor of St. Thomas Church, but rather the good-humored burgher who relishes a jest. Here is a satiric Bach, an earthy Bach, a Bach capable of stepping out of the church into the market-place—a Bach who might (had the form then been in existence) been a master of opera-buffa style.

In form, the Secular Cantata resembles that of the Church except for the absence of chorales.

### Coffee Cantata

Composed in 1732 to a libretto by Christian Friedrich Henrici, a satirical poet of Leipzig, the *Coffee Cantata*, "*Schweigt still, plaudert nicht*," mocks gaily at the passion of Leipzig women for drinking coffee. The action revolves around three characters: the Narrator (tenor), Schlendrian (baritone), and Lieschen (soprano).

Schlendrian laments the fact that his daughter Lieschen is an addict to coffee, and insists that she give up the vice. On her refusal to do so (on the ground that coffee is sweeter than a thousand kisses), he threatens to deny her the privilege of sitting at the window and to refuse her ribbons for her new hat. But Lieschen is quite willing to forego these pleasures for the sake of coffee. When Schlendrian, however, threatens as a final punishment to deny her a husband, Lieschen becomes more amenable. Yes—she will forego coffee to get herself a husband. But, as Schlendrian goes out to hunt a husband for her, she vows secretly not to marry anyone unless he will let her brew coffee as often as she likes. The cantata closes with a sprightly trio: "Cats must have their mice, and women their coffee!"

### Wedding Cantata

Though the exact date of the *Wedding Cantata*, "*Weichet nur betrübte Schatten*," is not known, it is believed to have been written during the Cöthen period—one of the few of Bach's secular cantatas not composed in Leipzig. It is written for a single soprano, and was probably composed on a special commission for use at a wedding festivity for the entertainment of the guests. Unlike the *Coffee Cantata*, it has no running narrative; in alternating recitatives and arias (some of the latter being uniquely lyrical and memorable) the soprano sings of a world reborn in loveliness, inspiring love and happiness, and then blesses the newly wedded pair.

Recommended recording: VM-664 (Elisabeth Schumann; Ensemble—Yella Pessl).

## CHORALE PRELUDES

Bach used the chorale prelude to introduce a hymn melody to his congregation. As is customary with him, such functional music becomes in his hands an expression of rare eloquence. He inherited the form from composers like Scheidt (1587–1654), Pachelbel (1653–1706), and Buxtehude (1637–1707), who developed the chorale prelude to such a high degree of technical mastery that Bach could add nothing to its technical features. But he did bring to it his fancy-free imagination and, because of this, the Bach chorale prelude soars on wings of inspiration. "Here," wrote Whittaker, "Bach gave full rein to his exuberant fancy, and in the large number (well over a hundred) . . . are most wonderful fantasies expressing the inner meaning of his favorite hymns. Sometimes, when we are given a general expression of a mood or verse or hymn, the melody becomes the material for a glorious arabesque; harmonies of wonderful richness and free counterpoints are added below until the simple plain tune is transfigured. At other times he will take each separate line and amplify the meaning of the corresponding portion of the text by means of derived or independent ideas which serve to introduce and accompany the line of the tune, and to bring it to a conclusion. At others, again, he will construct a kind of scena, using the hymn verse as a foundation; sometimes he will build a fantasia on melodic fragments."

Among the greatest of Bach's chorale preludes are the following: *An Wasserflüssen Babylon*, *Aus der Tiefe ruf' ich*; *Christ lag in Todesbanden*; *Ein feste Burg*; *Ich ruf' zu dir*; *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland*; *Wir glauben all'*. (See also *Orgelbüchlein*.)

Recommended recordings: Thirteen Chorale Preludes, CM-310 (Schweitzer). This splendid volume includes *An Wasserflüssen Babylon*; *Christus der uns selig macht*; *Christ lag in Todesbanden*; *Christum wir sollen loben schon*; *Da Jesu an dem Kreuze stand*; *Erschienen ist der herrliche Tag*; *Jesus Christus, unser Heiland*; *Liebster Jesu*; *Mit Fried' und Freud'*; *O Mensch, beweine deine Sünde gross*; *O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig*; *Sei gegrüßet, Jesu gütig*; *Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele*.

## CONCERTOS

When Bach went to Weimar in 1708 he was introduced for the first time to the instrumental music of such Italian masters as Corelli (1653–1713) and Vivaldi (c. 1675–1741), music which was greatly favored at the Grand Duke's court. Thus he came upon the concerto form, which up to that time had not been exploited by German composers. How deep an impression Vivaldi's concertos made upon him can be gauged by the fact that he transcribed many of them either for organ or for harpsichord.

The concerto of Vivaldi and Bach was not a showpiece for a solo instrument; it used the solo instrument, rather, as an inextricable part of the or-

chestra—now offering contrast to it, now playing with it in unison (*tutti*). The solo instrument and the orchestra were partners; there was an equal give-and-take between the two. The use of the orchestra as accompaniment for the solo instrument is a later development.

"Concerto" was a term first used by Ludovico Viadana in 1602 when he referred to a series of motets for voice and organ as "*concerti ecclesiastici*." Italian composers soon adopted the term—not for voices, however, but for instruments. In 1686, Torelli (c. 1650–1708)—the father of the concerto—published a concerto for two violins and figured bass. It was Corelli who first brought the form to a high stage of development, and Vivaldi who paved the way for Bach.

### Concertos for Orchestra

Bach's concertos for orchestra (the Brandenburg Concertos) are, strictly speaking, *concerti grossi*; groups of solo instruments are used in unison and contrast with the rest of the orchestra. The concerto grosso style was first developed by the Italian master, Corelli, in Opus 7 of his instrumental sonatas; here he established the form and the instrumentation it was to have with Bach and Handel. With Corelli the concerto grosso became a developed work in which solo instruments are set off against the orchestra and then combined in effective climaxes. Corelli also made use of light and shade to contrast the colors of his principal themes—one of the essential traits of the Bach orchestral concertos.

### Brandenburg Concertos

In 1717, Bach left Weimar to become the Kapellmeister to Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen. In this post, Bach arranged concerts of instrumental works. The Brandenburg Concertos, however, were not written for the court concerts at Cöthen, even though they were written in this period. In 1719, Christian Ludwig, Margrave of Brandenburg, commissioned Bach to write music for his own orchestra. Two years later, Bach despatched a set of six concertos, begging his patron (in a singularly self-effacing dedication) not to judge the imperfections of the concertos too harshly but rather to find in them "the profound respect and very humble allegiance which they seek to convey." Technically, Bach (indefatigable experimenter) tried to explore the possibilities of writing music for orchestra and solo instruments other than strings. Each concerto was written for a different group of instruments. Schweitzer has called these concertos "the purest products of Bach's polyphonic style."

The Margrave obviously did not appreciate the imagination, beauty, and wealth of originality that marked these concertos. In the catalogue of his musical collection, discovered many years later, the name of Bach did not appear at all, and it is believed that the concertos were disposed of for about ten cents apiece.

The six Brandenburg Concertos are as follows:

Concerto No. 1 in F, for solo violin, three oboes, bassoon, two horns, and strings. The only one of the six concertos to be in four movements, the work ends with a rather superfluous Minuet. Though the original score does not designate the tempo of the first movement it is assumed to be an Allegro.

Concerto No. 2 in F, for solo flute, oboe, trumpet, violin, and string orchestra, in three movements.

Concerto No. 3 in G, for three violins, violas, and 'cellos, one double bass, and cembalo, in two movements. Some conductors have interpolated between these two movements a middle slow movement from one of Bach's other works. Bach's own provision seems preferable: two big chords, *adagio*, to separate the two movements.

Concerto No. 4 in G, for two solo flutes, violin, and string orchestra, in three movements.

Concerto No. 5, in D, for solo harpsichord, flute, violin, and string orchestra, in three movements.

Concerto No. 6 in B-flat, for string orchestra (with no violins).

The remarkable features of the concertos are many, and new ones are ever uncovered with each rehearing. There is his wide expressive gamut: the sweeping power (second movement of the third concerto); the capacity for joy (first movement of the third concerto); the heart-moving poignancy (second movement of the second concerto). There is his wonderful capacity for building a monument out of a few stones (first movement of the first concerto—the material for the entire movement is found in the opening bar). There is his sound instinct for effect (the brilliant writing for the trumpet in the second concerto). There is his independent thinking (the extended solo harpsichord cadenza in the first movement of the fifth concerto).

Recommended recording: complete, CM-249-50 (Busch Chamber Players).

## Piano Concertos—Unaccompanied

### *Italian Concerto*

The *Italian Concerto* (or Concerto in Italian Style) is an attempt on Bach's part to write for the unaccompanied keyboard in the style established by the Italian masters in their concertos for solo instruments and orchestra. It was published in 1735, and appears in the second volume of *Clavierübung* (Bach's collection of keyboard music).

A. E. F. Dickinson wrote of this work as follows: "There is a directness of rhythm and melody which Bach seldom used elsewhere and which justifies . . . the original title of 'In Italian Style.' . . . The finale is one of the most rhythmically unswerving of his creations, and it is not surprising that . . . Scheibe praised the concerto as a perfect model of its kind. . . . The rhapsodic and beautiful slow movement . . . is easily understood. As a keyboard piece its persistent solo effect is most remarkable for the time."

The most significant of the three movements is the middle one, in which Bach endowed the lyric line of the Italian school with his own quality of poignancy. This movement, wrote Parry, "is one of those outpourings of free rhapsodical melody which Bach alone could carry out on such a grand scale and yet give the impression of perfect artistic organization."

Recommended recording: VM-806 (Schnabel).

### Piano Concertos with Orchestra

Bach composed some thirteen piano concertos, of which practically all (except possibly the A major, the E major, and the C major for two pianos) were adaptations of his violin concertos. It must be remembered that at this date the piano concerto was as yet an unknown form. Bach's restlessly experimental temperament inevitably led him to try adapting the Corelli and Vivaldi violin concerto to a keyboard instrument. In transforming his own concertos from the violin to the piano, however, he was much more than a transcriber: he rewrote the works to fit them to the new medium, often changed the key, enlarged the harmonic construction, and revised the melodic line to make it more suitable for the keyboard. He can rightly be called the father of the piano concerto.

It is important to recall that in Bach's orchestra, the piano always played a major role in pronouncing the figured bass—filling in the harmonic background for the entire orchestra; nor did it entirely lose this role in his piano concertos. Thus it will be noticed that the piano is used throughout each work, joining the orchestra in the *tuttis*. Thus, too, very often the piano almost assumes the role of accompanist to the orchestra, rather than vice-versa.

The origins of Bach's piano concertos are not known with any certainty beyond the fact that most of them were born as violin concertos. They are in three movements, the first usually a brisk allegro, broad in design and frequently stately; the second, a slow movement, tender and beautiful, of an Italianate singing character; the third (often in triple time), a fast movement that progresses with powerful momentum.

Today the most famous are the A major and the E major (both believed to have been written originally for the piano), the D minor, and the F minor.

Recommended recordings: Concerto in A major, VM-368 (Fischer; Fischer Chamber Orchestra); Concerto in D minor, VM-252 (Fischer; Fischer Chamber Orchestra); Concerto in F minor, VM-768 (Fischer; Fischer Chamber Orchestra).

### Concertos for Two Pianos with Orchestra

Bach wrote two famous concertos for two pianos and orchestra—one in C major, the other in C minor. Both are outstanding for two reasons. In their combination of two pianos (rare for the time) the two voices become one in a remarkable cohesion; the thematic material is assigned skilfully now to one

piano, now to the other, in an inextricable communion. They are outstanding, further, because in these two concertos—even more than in the Bach concertos for single piano and orchestra—a bold step is taken towards the concerto form of the future. A greater independence from orchestral bondage is here achieved by Bach; in the slow movement of the C major concerto, for example, the two pianos perform without any accompaniment whatever. Besides, in both concertos, Bach makes use of the cadenza, an invariable feature of the later concerto.

The closing movement of the C major concerto is one of the most impressive fugues Bach ever wrote, a movement majestic for its architectonic construction, in which the details are presented with remarkable clarity of writing.

(Bach wrote a third concerto for two pianos and orchestra, in the key of C minor; but this is merely an adaptation of his famous D minor concerto for two violins and orchestra.)

Recommended recording: Concerto in C major, VM-357 (Artur and K. U. Schnabel).

### Violin Concertos

The above comments on the Bach piano concertos apply as well to the violin concertos. The violin concerto was born in Italy with composers like Torelli and Corelli. Of Bach's treatment of the violin concerto and orchestra, nothing need be added which has not been said about the piano concerto. Bach's conception of the concerto was the same in both cases, as well as his treatment of the solo instrument. Of the concertos that he wrote for the violin, two are frequently performed: the E major and the A minor.

Recommended recordings: Concerto in E major, VM-221 (Menuhin; Orchestra—Enesco); Concerto in A minor, V-14370-1 (Menuhin; Orchestra—Enesco).

### Concerto for Two Violins and Orchestra

The famous D minor concerto for two violins and orchestra is one of the happiest products of Bach's contrapuntal genius. He uses the two violins as two independent voices. The first movement is treated fugally and becomes a structure of cathedral-like grandeur. In the second movement, he reveals his incomparable ability to endow the fugal form with intensely felt emotion, showing that in his hands the fugue can be much more than a mathematically exact form—can serve rather as the vehicle to convey a profound and moving eloquence. Listening to this slow fugue we are reminded of Terry's remark that Bach often used the fugue "to interpret the infinite, saw the heavens opened, and was prophetically oracular." The concluding movement moves briskly to an exciting close.

Recommended recording: VM-932 (Menuhin, Enesco; Orchestra—Monteux).

## MASS

The Mass, half-brother to the Oratorio, had long been a part of the liturgical service. With Palestrina (1524-94) it took an impressive step toward complete realization as an artistic form. Palestrina wrote more than ninety Masses and can be said to have been (more than any other single composer) the man to set the stage for Bach.

*Mass in B Minor*

If it is possible to single out one work of Bach that stands as his crowning masterpiece, that one work would undoubtedly be the B minor Mass. Bach composed it in 1733 when, seeking a post in the Saxon Royal Chapel, he sent a part of it to King Augustus III of Saxony as an "insignificant example of my skill." "Insignificant" indeed! Few works in the entire musical repertory tower to such Alpine heights; few single works contain within themselves so wide a gamut of feeling, thought, contemplation.

Leopold Stokowski has admirably summed up the qualities that make the Mass one of the sublime artistic creations in the field of music. "The *Mass in B minor* is planned on a vast scale, and the texture of the music is complex and highly concentrated, revealing a slow and rich outwelling of his inspiration. . . . While it is cast in a form similar to the great Masses preceding Bach, this form is greatly enlarged and extended. . . . It has cosmic vastness of expression and consciousness. . . . The parts which are in reality prayers, such as the beginning of the first 'Kyrie,' have the intensity and simple directness that probably is always one of the chief elements in prayer. . . . In many places, such as the great choruses of the 'Gloria in excelsis Deo,' the 'Credo,' the 'Sanctus,' the 'Osanna,' there is a blazing jubilation like radiant sunlight. It is as if all Nature, man, the planets, the whole universe were singing together. . . . At certain moments in the Mass, such as the 'Qui tollis' and 'Et incarnatus' and 'Crucifixus,' there is in the music profound mystical intensity that could only have come from the spirit of a man who was moved to the uttermost of his being."

Recommended recording: VM-104 (Royal Chapel Society and London Symphony Orchestra with Soloists—Coates).

## ORATORIO

*Christmas Oratorio*

The *Christmas Oratorio*—composed in 1734 and first performed at St. Thomas Church during the Christmas season of that year—is not, strictly speaking, an oratorio. It consists of six cantatas, each one meant for performance on a different day of the Christmas festival. The text was drawn from the Nativity sections of St. Luke and St. Matthew.



The first part of the Oratorio was for performance on Christmas Day; the next two, on the two succeeding days; subsequent parts for New Year's Day, New Year's Sunday, and the Feast of Epiphany. Unlike Bach's Passions, it does not contain a dramatic development and—because it was composed as six smaller works comparatively independent—it has no sustained or cumulative interest. It is not the Bach of the Mass or the Passions that we have here, yet it contains some remarkable music. Most famous, of course, is the sensitive and elegiac instrumental introduction, pastoral in mood, that opens the second part of the Oratorio, in which the birth of Christ is announced to the waiting shepherds. This Pastorale (or Sinfonia) is a simple melody for strings interrupted by the chanting of reeds—one of the most tranquil and serene pages of musical beauty ever created. It is comparable to the great paintings of Nativity by the Italian masters.

Recommended recording: Pastorale, V-7142 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

For Brandenburg Concertos, see Concertos; for orchestral Suites see Suites, Orchestra; for transcriptions, see page 29.

## ORGAN MUSIC

The greater part of Bach's organ masterpieces date from his nine-year Weimar period. It is a library of music incomparable for variety, scope, richness. He took the organ forms bequeathed to him by masters like Frescobaldi (1583-1643), Froberger (1616-67), Schein (1586-1630), and Buxtehude (1637-1707), extended them, then enriched them with his seemingly inexhaustible imagination and invention. As Parry wrote: "His work in this line seems to comprise all the possibilities of pure organ music. Everything that has been written since is but a pale shadow of his splendid conceptions. . . . He had complete mastery of all genuine organ devices which tell in the hearing—the effects of long sustained notes accompanied by wonderful ramifications of rapid passages; the effects of sequences of linked suspensions of great powerful chords; the contrast of whirling rapid notes with slow and stately march of pedal and harmonies. He knew how the pearly clearness of certain stops lent itself to passages of intricate rhythmic counterpoint, and what charm lay in the perfect management of several simultaneous melodies—especially when the accents came at different moments in different parts; and he designed his movements so well that he made all such and many other genuine organ effects exert their fullest impressions on the hearers. He rarely allows himself to break into a dramatic vein, though he sometimes appeals to the mind in phrases which are closely akin to the dramatic—as in the great *Fantasia in G minor*, the *Toccata in D minor*, and the *Prelude in B minor*. He occasionally touches on tender and pathetic strains, but for the most part

adopts an attitude of great dignity which is at once generous in its warmth and vigor, and reserved in the matter of sentiment."

The organ was, of course, Bach's personal instrument (he was one of the greatest organists of his time); for it he composed his most personal music. "He was," wrote Terry, "happiest on the organ, on which his supreme virtuosity completely expressed his design. Of all others it was the medium most responsive to the emotion that swayed him. In its company he soared in free communion with the highest intelligences that inspired him. To it he confided his most intimate thoughts, and could he have foreseen the immortality that posterity bestowed on him, he would undoubtedly have associated it with his favorite instrument."

The organ music of Bach offers inexhaustible territory for exploration, and it is greatly to be regretted that so little of it is known to the general public, and that this little is usually only in orchestral or piano transcriptions. It is, of course, impossible to discuss all of Bach's organ works here; but it is possible to point to a few that have been performed most frequently and that are best known as characteristic of Bach's genius in this direction.

### *Fantasia and Fugue in G minor*

While the Fantasia form suggests freedom and improvisation, Bach's masterpiece is well ordered and logical, a gem of architectonic construction. Although it is the expression of a well disciplined mind, it is rhapsodic in feeling, spacious as a cathedral, of a dynamic power. The G minor Fugue—known as the "Great"—is based upon a well-known theme which is developed with comparative simplicity, almost no other material being introduced; yet this theme lends itself to magnificent elaboration and growth.

Recommended recording: CM-270 (Schweitzer).

### *Orgelbüchlein*

It is Schweitzer's opinion that the *Orgelbüchlein* (Little Organ Book) is "the lexicon of Bach's musical speech." It comprises forty-five Chorale Preludes for the various seasons of the Church calendar beginning with Advent, continuing with Christmas, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, through the Ascension, Whitsunday, and Trinity Sunday, and ending with The Christian Life. Each of these chorale preludes is the last word in simplicity of structure. The theme is generally pronounced by soprano and is embellished by other voices with an endless variety of figurations to illustrate the words of the chorale. Passing as Bach does from one season to another, he is able to voice a whole gamut of moods—from rejoicing to pain, from solemnity to exaltation. And he does this through music that springs from the profoundest sources of his inspiration. Each Chorale Prelude is a miniature tone-picture exquisite in every detail. Though the mould is small, the material is infinite in its emotional, pictorial, and religious feeling.

Recommended recording: VM-652, 697, 711 (Biggs).

*Passacaglia in C minor*

The passacaglia is an old dance, probably Spanish in origin, which was adapted by Frescobaldi for instrumental music. It is characterized by a theme, sounded in the bass (basso ostinato), which is played throughout the entire work, while the other voices furnish embellishments, enlargements, and variations on the theme.

In this work, Bach converted the passacaglia into a dramatic composition of epical proportions. Announced in the bass, the theme is then extended and enlarged in variations amazing in their variety of mood and atmosphere, passing from an exciting tension to spiritual exaltation. The Fugue (utilizing a part of the original passacaglia theme as its subject) carries the work to a breath-taking climax.

Recommended recording: Musicraft Set 10 (Weinrich).

*Prelude and Fugue in A minor*

The Prelude of this magnificent work might be called Bach's "Moonlight Sonata." It is touched by the gentlest tints, and is nocturnal in its mood. A sensitive atmosphere is created with poetic feeling. A welcome contrast is provided by the fugue, which is one of the most skilful of Bach's creations in this form. This work is, according to Filson Young, "Bach's song of love, the life-filling emotion that is common to us all, in which none stands on higher ground than others, without which a man can drink deeply of neither joy nor sorrow."

Recommended recording: Fugue in A minor, CM-320 (Schweitzer).

*Prelude and Fugue in C major*

Composed during the Leipzig period, this masterpiece comes relatively late in Bach's career. Like the *Prelude and Fugue in A minor* (above) this one is contemplative and pastoral, its pervading atmosphere being that of a lyric poem, though in its closing bars it rises to controlled passion. The simple and brief Fugue—the subject is only one bar in length—reveals Bach's ability to create grandeur out of the simplest of materials.

Recommended recording: CM-320 (Schweitzer).

*Prelude and Fugue in E minor ("Wedge")*

This is one of Bach's most impressive structures. On two principal themes and three subsidiary themes, the Prelude is built into an edifice of incomparable majesty. The Fugue maintains the immensity of stature and brings the work to a grandiose ending.

Recommended recording: CM-320 (Schweitzer).

*Toccata in C major*

One of the profoundest of Bach's organ works, this is in three movements, and is sometimes called *Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue*. Historically the Toccata

was essentially a showpiece intended to exhibit the virtuosity of the organ performer; its pioneers included Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583–1643), who brought to it a high degree of technical ingenuity. But in Bach's hands, this technical display piece becomes a drama of Grecian stature. The C major Toccata opens with brilliant bravura music which is a powerful presentation of sweeping ideas and heroic sentiments. By contrast with most of Bach's toccatas and fugues, a slow section is introduced between the Toccata and the Fugue—an Adagio constituting one of the most exquisite pages in Bach, an unforgettable song that combines sweetness and pain. The Fugue is carved in monumental lines and enhances the epic character of the work.

Recommended recording: Musicraft 1120–21 (Weinrich).

### *Toccata and Fugue in D minor*

The opening of the Toccata is a subject of Herculean strength which grows and expands into music of theatrical grandeur. André Pirro suggests that this part is programmatic: "The dazzling lightning, the clap of thunder, rumbling formidably in the repercussions of a long broken chord above the crash of a profound pedal; the wind, then the hail; we are in a classical storm." The Fugue first invokes an atmosphere of serenity, but it is merely the calm before another dramatic storm which brings the composition to a thrilling climax.

Recommended recording: V-18058 (Biggs).

## PASSIONS

Though one of the first known Passions was published as early as 1505 (by Obrecht), Bach acquired the Passion form from Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672) and Reinhard Keiser (1674–1739). Schütz, like Bach, wrote Passions according to St. Matthew and St. John. Schütz's use of the recitative and his highly expressive choruses foreshadow Bach; while with Keiser operatic elements entered. But it was Bach who, more effectively than any of his predecessors, matched the stately Scripture passages with music of equal majesty. No one before him—not even Schütz—equaled Bach's dramatic intensity, mystic emotionalism, variety of style and mood, eloquent tragedy, other-worldly spirituality. As Pirro wrote: "Bach illustrates the story of the Scripture, embroidering the soul-stirring episode with tears, and painting now in somber now in lurid hues the colors of fire and blood."

### *Passion According to St. John*

Of the two major Passions composed by Bach, the *St. John* was the earlier. It was composed during the winter of 1722–3, and its first performance took place in either 1723 or 1724. In all probability Bach himself prepared the text from the 18th and 19th chapters of St. John with additional material by the poet Barthold Hinrich Brockes.

The quality emphasized in the *St. John Passion* is its high and cogent

drama. From its very opening, the work has a feeling for theatrical climax; particularly dramatic are some of its sweeping choruses, which move with a relentless drive. Yet one should not underestimate its less theatrical qualities. As Schweitzer wrote: "The brooding tenderness and deep compassion with which Bach describes and meditates upon the incomparable drama are reflected in page after page of gravely poignant beauty—a beauty and tenderness of the most subduing eloquence. In the words of Jesus; in many passages of the narrative given to the Evangelist; in the famous arioso '*Betrachte, meine Seele*'; in the aria '*Es ist vollbracht*'—one of Bach's most wonderful inspirations; in these pages, Bach is the matchless threnodist, the pitiful singer of the woes of men. And in such moments as the final page of the last chorale, '*Ach Herr, lass dein lieb' Engelein*,' he is, as he alone knew how to be, the maker of music so transcendent in its divine beauty that there are no words with which to speak of it that would not seem impertinent."

Recommended recordings: "*Herr, unser Herrscher*," "*O grosse Lieb*," "*Dein Will*," "*Weg, weg mit dem*," "*Ruht wohl*," C-D15015-6 (Brussels Conservatory Chorus and Orchestra—Defauw); "*Es ist vollbracht*," (orchestral transcription), V-8764 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski); "*Ach Herr, lass dein lieb' Engelein*," V-18326 (Marian Anderson).

### *Passion According to St. Matthew*

The text of the *St. Matthew Passion* was written by Christian Friedrich Henrici in 1728 from the material in the 27th and 28th chapters of the Gospel According to St. Matthew. The first performance took place at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig on April 15, 1729, before a somewhat bewildered congregation. "Some high officials and well-born ladies in one of the galleries began to sing the first chorale with great devotion from their books," reported one of Bach's pupils; "but as the theatrical music proceeded, they were thrown into the greatest wonderment, saying to each other, 'What does it all mean?', while one old lady exclaimed, 'God help us! 'Tis surely an opera-comedy!'"

The *St. Matthew Passion* is less dramatic than the *St. John*, but it rises to higher altitudes of lyric beauty. Probably because it deals more thoroughly with Christ and His sufferings, it has many more pages of moving eloquence than the *St. John*. Bach's conception is here somewhat more reverent than in the earlier work. For example, in his accompaniments to the recitatives, Bach makes no distinction between Jesus and the other characters in the *St. John*, whereas in the *St. Matthew* all the recitatives of Jesus are accompanied by string orchestra instead of by the cembalo only. In the *Matthew*, Bach also achieves a greater feeling of contemplation and spirituality, although (as was said above) these are not lacking in *John*. Beyond all this, because he is using a much larger canvas in the *Matthew*, his brush strokes are broader and more epical, though without neglecting details and incidents. The work as a whole has an epic character.

"Devotion, humility, and adoration reach their highest intensity in this

music," wrote Whittaker. "It is the most intensely personal document in the whole range of musical art; it stands above creeds and beliefs, and speaks from heart to heart in the most miraculous manner. Although it is cast in a colossal mould, lasting over three hours when performed fully, demanding double orchestra and double choir, with even, in one number, a ninth voice added, one forgets the elaborate means employed, and the story passes along in the simplest manner, viewed by a mind full of reverence, sympathy, and faith."

Recommended recording: complete recording, VM-412, 413 (Boston Symphony; Harvard Glee Club; Radcliffe Choral Society; Soloists—Koussevitzky).

## PIANO WORKS

(For English Suites and French Suites see Suites, Piano; for Italian Concertos see Concertos, Piano Unaccompanied; for Concertos with orchestra see Concertos, Piano Concertos With Orchestra; for Transcriptions see page 29.)

Bach, of course, did not know the modern piano, but the word "piano" is here used to denote either of the two keyboard instruments of Bach's day of which the piano was the successor: the harpsichord and the clavichord. The breadth and scope of Bach's writing for these keyboard instruments make it more or less adaptable for the modern piano, on which it is most frequently heard today.

### *The Art of the Fugue*

It is not known whether Bach himself gave this epic of the fugue form the name by which it is known today. And it is certain that he had no particular keyboard instrument in mind when he wrote it, though it is generally accepted today as either a piano or an organ work. In any case, *The Art of the Fugue* is a master's farewell to a form all of whose artistic and technical possibilities he had exploited. It is Bach's last work—composed between 1747 and 1750; either blindness or paralysis prevented him from completing one of the fugues. It is probable that he intended this work as a scientific experiment to show to what monumental proportions the fugal art can be developed on any given theme.

It represents the apotheosis of Bach's fugal writing. What Terry wrote of Bach's fugues in general applies with eloquent appropriateness to this, his masterpiece in this form. The fugue, according to Terry, was "the mode of utterance most attuned to his [Bach's] nature. His fugues are unique because among his predecessors and contemporaries, he alone fully realised the romantic and artistic possibilities of the fugal form. His personality is behind every bar of them. They are the poetry of a master who found it natural and congenial to express himself in that form. His relation to the fugue, in fact, is that of Beethoven to the sonata, or of Haydn to the quartet. . . . His technical skill in them remains unique and unsurpassed. No one has approached him in the miraculous complexity of his part writing, or his ingenuity in

weaving melodic strains into a single fabric. No one equally displays his gift of melody, his sense of form, the virile quality of his themes, the boldness of his technique, even the daring of his harmonic coloring."

The work was published in 1751, the year after Bach's death. Immediately it lapsed into an obscurity rare even for Bach. Only thirty copies were sold within the next few years, and the copper plates from which these had been reproduced were disposed of by Bach's son Karl Philipp Emanuel as scrap metal. The work was forgotten by most, and those who remembered it spoke of it as a laborious pedagogical work—artifice rather than art. In the early twentieth century, an orchestral transcription by a young German composer, Wolfgang Graeser, helped to bring the monumental work to the attention of the music world. Performances of this transcription in Leipzig proved so popular that special "Art of the Fugue" express trains were run to that city from Berlin.

Recommended recording: VM-832, 833 (Biggs).

### *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue*

This work derives its name from the chromatic modulations in the Fantasy and the chromatic character of the Fugue theme. It was composed in Leipzig in or about 1730. Exploiting the resources of piano writing in such a manner as to dwarf the efforts of Bach's predecessors and contemporaries, the *Chromatic Fantasy* is remarkable for its adventurous runs, its striking use of arpeggios, and its remarkably enriched harmonic language. It opens with a dramatic recitative (a form transplanted to the piano from vocal literature with overpowering effect). The Fantasy, which is free, of limitless expanse, and full of soaring flights of tone, serves as a sort of a prelude to the comparatively austere Fugue.

Recommended recording: V-14144-5 (Landowska).

### *Goldberg Variations*

It is interesting to point out that one of Bach's greatest works for the piano—the one in which he aspires to imaginative inventions of incomparable scope—was written as a soporific. For Count von Kayserling, Russian envoy to the Dresden court, suffered from insomnia, and he used to have his clavichord performer, Johann Gottlieb Goldberg (a pupil of Bach), play music in an adjoining room until slumber was induced. Kayserling commissioned Bach to write a work expressly for this purpose—music that should be serene, soothing, and cheerful. Bach decided that the ideal form would be an extended set of variations on a Sarabande theme of quiet and tender beauty; and the work, when published in 1736, was named for Kayserling's performer, Goldberg. Whether the music proved an effectual soporific is not known; what is known is that it became a great favorite with Kayserling, who frequently referred to it as "my variations."

With the *Goldberg Variations*, Bach extended the horizons of piano music from the points of view of dynamics and color. Schweitzer pointed out: "Of all Bach's works, these come closest to the modern pianoforte sonata. If their authorship were not known, anyone would take the penultimate and antepenultimate variations to be works of Beethoven's last period."

Recommended recording: VM-1022 (Landowska).

### *Inventions*

These little studies—fifteen two-part, and fifteen three-part—have become indispensable stepping-stones for the piano student toward the greater and maturer Bach. Bach himself explains the purpose of these pieces in a preface to his son Wilhelm Friedemann, saying that they are meant to be a beginning whereby lovers of the piano can learn the exact way to play not only two-part music but also music of more voices with clarity and smoothness. It also teaches a style of playing that sings and is eloquently expressive.

Wanda Landowska not only finds these Inventions wonderful exercises in teaching independent freedom of movement of the two hands, and an all-important preliminary to the study of Bach's piano music; she also considers them good music in their own right, and has often played them at her harpsichord recitals. To her they seem "some of the purest music that Bach has created. . . . That miracle of Bach's inspiration finds itself in its purest, most beautiful, most succinct form in the two-part inventions. It is here that Bach's 'singing style' can be found not only in epitome but also in flowering. Here, the melodic line of Bach is perpetually alive, merry, full of life. . . . It is spirit and freshness and fullness. Here, the two voices are inextricably intertwined into miracles of polyphonic network, marvelous to behold and to listen to. Study the Invention No. 4 in D major with its sad colors of gray and lavender. Study the jocose and spirited E major Invention. Study the supremely beautiful A minor Invention into whose small mould Bach poured so much of his magnificent soul."

Recommended recording: Asch M-102 (Balogh).

### *Partitas*

Bach composed six partitas for the piano. Each is a suite of dances which (like the famous French Suites) reveal Bach in a lighter and sprightlier vein, writing for the keyboard with a deftness of touch and etching the most delicate colors. The form includes a variety of old dances like the Allemande, the Courante, Sarabande, Gigue, etc. In transforming these dances for the purposes of instrumental music, Bach (in the words of Whittaker) "summarized the whole possibilities of the classical dance and the other short forms common at the time."

Recommended recordings: Partita No. 1 in B flat, V-11483-4 (Samuel); Partita No. 2 in C minor, CX-5 (Samuel); Partita No. 5 in G, CX-208 (Giesecking); Partita No. 6 in E minor, CX-135 (Giesecking).



### *The Well-Tempered Clavier*

Bach composed the *Well-Tempered Clavier* (or Clavier Tuned in Equal Temperament) to prove the practicability of what was then a comparatively new system of keyboard-tuning utilizing all the keys of the major and minor scales. He did this by writing a Prelude and a Fugue for each of the keys.

Paul Láng traces the history of equal temperament. "The elimination of the small discrepancy which appears when two identical large intervals are joined had occupied scholars and composers since the end of the fifteenth century. It had been found that perfect tuning, however beautiful in the original key, leads to discrepancies even in the neighboring keys. . . . The earlier experiments sought to safeguard the wonderful sonority of perfect tuning, but later it was found that for the sake of practical usefulness some of the beauty of pure tuning must be sacrificed. Finally, Andreas Werckmeister's eminently practical suggestion of dividing the octave into twelve identical intervals gave us a workable arrangement called equal temperament. His system distributed the discrepancy evenly within the seven octaves of our practical musical range, thus making every interval slightly incorrect, but with a discrepancy not commonly noticed . . . while the resultant practical advantage is far-reaching. . . . Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer's *Ariadne Musica* (1715), a collection of preludes and fugues through the circle of tonalities, was the interesting model for Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*."

The two volumes of the *Well-Tempered Clavier* were composed in Cöthen (1722) and Leipzig (1744) respectively. This collection of preludes and fugues which has become (in Schumann's descriptive phrase) the daily bread of piano students, is much more than excellent pedagogical material; much more than the scientific proof of the advantage of using equal temperament. To these pieces Bach brought his usual harmonic daring, his command of compositorial technique, his structural logic, and his capacity to translate mere exercises into deeply personal utterances. As Whittaker said, this collection is "an imperishable monument to his genius." It has "infinite variety of mood and style; one can find music there to meet all needs, to synchronise all states of emotion. . . . The preludes . . . are amazing. The Bach-lover, as he grows in years, turns more and more to these. . . . The form of the prelude is free. It bears undoubtedly the seeds of many flowers and fruits of the future, besides forming a glorious garden for present happiness. No composer ever spoke such widely different thoughts. Compare the romantic E-flat minor of the first book with the magnificent orchestral D major of the second, or the exquisitely tender F minor of the second book with the toccata-like B-flat of the first. From the very wonderful succession of chords of the opening Prelude in C, the most perfect harmonic scheme ever devised, to the wistful, almost playfully sad, counterpoint of the closing Prelude in B minor, they speak as no musician ever spoke save Bach."

The Fugues are, however, artistically important in themselves. "There are

very few that have only technical interest," wrote Parry. "Most of them obviously illustrate such states of feeling and of mood as music is especially fitted to express, and they do so in terms of the most perfect and finished art. There are fugues which express many shades of merriment and banter (C minor, C-sharp major, B-flat in the first book; F minor in the second). Strong confident fugues (B-flat minor and B minor, first book); serenely reposeful fugues (E major and B major, second book); tenderly pathetic fugues (G-sharp minor in both books)."

Recommended recordings: complete, Bach "48" Society (first three volumes), Volume 4, VM-334 (Fischer).

## SONATAS

The instrumental sonata, as Bach wrote it, was the successor of the *sonata da chiesa* (or instrumental sonata for the church), generally written for a group of instruments accompanied by organ. The first master to establish the sonata as an important form of instrumental writing was Corelli, in his epoch-making Opus 5, a pioneer masterpiece from which all future sonata-writing was to stem. In his twelve sonatas of Op. 5, Corelli emancipated the violin as a solo instrument and enabled it to speak its own language. (See Corelli.) Bach was familiar with Corelli's sonatas and was profoundly influenced by them.

### Violin Sonatas, Unaccompanied

Bach composed six sonatas for unaccompanied violin. Strictly speaking, however, only three are called sonatas, since their respective movements have the customary tempo markings. Three other "sonatas" have dance forms in place of tempo indications, and are now more accurately referred to as *Partitas* (see *Partitas*, Piano).

These six works for unaccompanied violin are among the most extraordinary in the library of violin music. Not even the unaccompanied violin could fetter Bach's expansive genius. "The limitations of the instrument," wrote Whittaker, "would suggest that his thoughts, too, would be circumscribed. Yet so far did the composer soar above the restrictions that are imposed that there is to be found a wealth of noble ideas. . . . To the violinist they are a complete world of beauty, and a training ground whereon his powers may always be proved and tested." These solo sonatas (and partitas) were completely forgotten by the world of music. In an effort to reintroduce them to the music world in a more ingratiating form, Felix Mendelssohn issued the *Chaconne* movement of the D minor Partita with an original piano accompaniment, and some time later (1854) Robert Schumann issued all the six sonatas with piano accompaniments. It was to be many years, however, before these masterpieces became known as they deserved to be—not until

(first) they were rediscovered by the violinist Ferdinand David (1810–73) and by him issued in a new edition (still without accompaniments), and (second) the virtuoso Joseph Joachim (1831–1907) performed them indefatigably at his concerts.

The Prelude of the E major Partita is particularly well known, both in its original form and in transcriptions.<sup>1</sup> But the most famous single section of these unaccompanied violin works is the *Chaconne* movement—a set of thirty-three remarkable variations—with which the D minor Partita closes. Spitta wrote of the *Chaconne* as follows: “The flooding wealth of figuration pouring forth from a few, hardly noticeable sources betrays the most exact knowledge of violin technique, as well as the most absolute control of an imagination more gigantic, perhaps, than any other artist possessed. We must remember that it was all written for a single violin. And yet what does this little instrument not allow one to experience! . . . The master’s spirit inspires the instrument to express the inconceivable; at the end of the D major movement, the music swells like organ-tone, and at times one hears a whole chorus of violins.”

Recommended recordings: Sonata in G minor, CX-1 (Szigeti); Partita No. 1 in B minor, VM-487 (Menuhin); Sonata No. 2 in A minor, CX-2 (Szigeti); Partita No. 2 in D minor, VM-232 (Menuhin); Sonata No. 3 in C major, VM-284 (Menuhin); Partita No. 3 in E major, VM-488 (Menuhin). *See also* transcriptions, p. 29.

### Violin Sonatas with Piano

It is in his six sonatas for violin and piano, much more notably than in the unaccompanied sonatas, that Bach carried on the torch of Corelli. Using the violin and piano as two independent voices, Bach wrote richly for the two instruments, and with a wealth of polyphonic imagination. Perhaps the most striking aspect of these sonatas is the remarkable union between the two instruments, each supplementing the other, each contributing to the other its own ideas and nuances. The independence which the piano acquires at Bach’s hands is noticeably demonstrated in the G major sonata, in whose third movement the piano is used in a solo.

That Bach was influenced by Corelli’s slow movements is proved again and again in these sonatas—in, for example, the Adagio of the E major sonata, and in that of the F minor sonata, in which the violin pronounces a benediction of rare beauty. The Siciliano—opening movement of the C minor sonata—has also become famous, and is strikingly similar to a passage in Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*, “*Erbarme dich, mein Gott*.”

Recommended recordings: Sonata No. 1 in B minor, Gamut 12117–8 (Ehlers; Schwartz); Sonata No. 2 in A major, Gamut 12119–20 (Ehlers; Schwartz); Sonata No. 3 in E major, VM-887 (Yehudi and Hephzibah Menuhin); Sonata No. 4 in C minor, Gamut 12123–4 (Ehlers; Schwartz); Sonata No. 5 in F minor, Gamut 12125–6 (Ehlers; Schwartz); Sonata No. 6 in G major, Gamut 12127–8 (Ehlers; Schwartz).

## SUITES

The Suite, a collection of dances written all in one key and one mood, was developed as a form during the seventeenth century—"a single stone cut with many facets," in Spitta's description. In Bach's suites, "a fragment of a vanished world of grace and elegance has been preserved to us . . . the ideal musical picture of a rococo period" (Schweitzer).

Each of Bach's suites contains an Allemande, a Courante, and a Sarabande movement. Other old dance forms like the Bourrée, Gigue, Polonaise, Gavotte, Passepied, and Minuet are represented in the various suites.

## Orchestral Suites

It is not definitely known when Bach wrote his four orchestral suites, though they probably date from his Cöthen period. He referred to these works not as suites but as Overtures, because the introductory movement was introduced by the overture-form perfected by Lully (1632-87)—a slow and majestic introduction followed by a fugue and ending with a return of the original slow section. However, the series of dance movements that follow each overture justifies the later designation of these works as Suites.

Of the four works in this Bach category, the first and the fourth (C major, D major) represent minor Bach and are rarely heard. The second and the third, however, are in Bach's happiest creative vein and are among the composer's best-known works.

The second suite, in B minor, is scored for flute and strings. Its movements include an Overture, Rondo, Sarabande, Bourrée, Polonaise, Minuet, and Badinerie. Except for the stately overture and the sedate and well-mannered Sarabande, the Suite is graceful, gay, and vivacious throughout. A conventional suite usually ends with a Gigue, but in this work Bach substituted a sprightly and mischievous Badinerie.

The third suite, in D major, is scored for two oboes, three trumpets, drums, strings, and cembalo, and includes the following movements: Overture, Air, two Gavottes, Bourrée, and Gigue. The first part of the suite (Overture and Air) is majestic; the second part (Gavottes, Bourrée, and Gigue), sprightly and light-footed. The interpolation of an "Air" movement in a suite is unconventional. The "Air" in this suite is world-famous—one of the most beautiful song movements in the entire realm of orchestral literature; its popularity has been considerably enhanced through Wilhelmj's transcription for the violin, which he called *Air for the G String*.

The third suite owes its resurrection to Felix Mendelssohn, who in 1838 conducted it at a concert of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra.

Recommended recordings: VM-332, 339 (Busch Chamber Players).

## Piano Suites

### *English Suites*

Bach composed six English Suites during his Cöthen period. Why they were subsequently called "English" (for Bach never gave them this name) has been a subject of speculation. It is suggested, for instance, that the epithet was acquired because they carry on the traditions of the Purcell suite. Somber and grave in mood, with a stateliness of material, these suites are in marked contrast to the charm, gaiety, and cameo-like perfection of the French Suites.

Recommended recordings: Suite No. 2 in A minor, V-14877-8 (Landowska); Suite No. 5, in E minor, V-14859-61 (Pessl); Suite No. 6 in D minor, VM-443 (Pessl).

### *French Suites*

These are also six in number; they, too, were composed during the Cöthen period; again, like the English Suites, their name was not given them by Bach. The reason for the name "French" may be that they carry on the form established by Couperin and that Bach is here noticeably influenced by Couperin's graceful manner of writing for the keyboard. In any case, the French Suites are all infectious and seductive, containing some of the sprightliest music Bach ever wrote.

Recommended recording: Suite No. 6 in E major, V-14383 (Landowska).

## Violoncello Suites

In Bach's six Suites for Unaccompanied Violoncello, the instrument acquires an independence and variety of speech it had not known before. The comments above on the unaccompanied Violin Sonatas apply also to the 'cello suites. With an extraordinary knowledge of the 'cello, Bach gave it orchestra and organ-like sonorities. These Suites lay neglected even longer than did the Violin Sonatas, lying forgotten and dusty in libraries and music shops awaiting concert-hall familiarity until the dawn of the present century—and then attaining it largely through the missionary work of Pablo Casals, who was the most powerful single agent in overcoming the ignorance, even apathy, of the general public in respect to this music.

Recommended recordings: Suite No. 1 in G major, and Suite No. 6 in D major, VM-742 (Casals); Suite No. 2 in D minor, and Suite No. 3 in C major, VM-611 (Casals).

## TRANSCRIPTIONS

### Orchestral Transcriptions

There exists an abundant library of Bach's music transcribed from various of his works for the modern symphony orchestra, and it has been the subject

of considerable controversy. The argument of the transcriber is as follows: If Bach can be made more effective in modern orchestral dress, why hesitate to clothe him in it? Bach, after all, did not have a modern symphony orchestra in his own day; if he had had, he certainly would have written for it. One of the reasons why Bach wrote so copiously and ambitiously for the organ was that it offered him a far richer variety of colors than did the orchestra of his time. No doubt, had there been a modern symphony orchestra in Bach's time, Bach would have written many of his great organ works for it rather than for the organ.

The musical purist, on the other hand, argues that Bach's music ought not to be tampered with, that it is sufficiently modern in its original version, that any transcribing operates to the disadvantage of the master. Besides, says the purist, if Bach had had a symphony orchestra to write for, he would have written his works differently for it, since he always moulded his material flexibly to his medium.

One can argue the question *pro* and *con* indefinitely. In spite of arguments, the library of transcriptions continues to grow. At their best, these transcriptions preserve the spirit of Bach while endowing his music with a new coat of many colors. Unfortunately, abuses have arisen which alienate the sensitive music-lover. Many orchestrations are far too ornate; vulgarity is mistaken for brilliance. Others betray a clash between Bach's personality and the transcriber's. Again, too many transcribers are not content with transplanting Bach's music from one medium to another, but, in the process, insist on improving upon the music itself.

When the transcription is projected simply, following the dictates of Bach's original intentions, it can be uniquely effective; and it can add some wonderful music to the orchestral repertoire.

The orchestral transcriptions of Bach's music are so numerous that it is possible to mention here only the most famous of them. Those listed below are among the best known.

*Art of the Fugue.* An excellent and tasteful transcription for orchestra has been made by Paul Graener; in this version it has been heard in our concert halls. (See also Transcriptions for String Quartet.)

*Chaconne.* Transcriptions have been made by Hubay, Stokowski, and A. Walter Kramer. The Hubay version is pretentious and overwritten, converting much of the grandeur of the music to sheer bluster. Stokowski takes liberties with the Bach music, but his transcription is effectively scored. (Recommended recording: V-8492-4, Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski.) The simplest transcription, and for that reason the most satisfying, is that of A. Walter Kramer.

*Chorale Preludes*, as follows: "*Aus der Tiefe ruf' ich*"—arranged by Stokowski. (Recommended recording: V-7553, Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski.) "*Komm, Gott, Schöpfer*"—arranged by Schönberg. "*Nun komm' der Heiden Heiland*"—arranged by Stokowski. (Recommended recording: V-8494, Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski.) "*Schmücke dich*"—arranged by Schönberg. "*Wir glauben alle*"—arranged by Sto-

kowski. (Recommended recording: V-7089, Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski.) The two Schönberg transcriptions are unacceptable—obscurely orchestrated and marked by Schönberg mannerisms that are incongruous with Bach. The Stokowski arrangement of “*Wir glauben*” is dramatically projected.

“*Es ist vollbracht*,” from the *St. John Passion*. Reverently transcribed for orchestra by Stokowski. (Recommended recording: V-8764, Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski.)

*Fantasia and Fugue in G minor* (organ). A complicated and disturbingly elaborate transcription has been made by Elgar. Stokowski has made an apt transcription of the Fugue alone, which is usually referred to as the “Great” G minor Fugue. (Recommended recording of the Fugue, V-1718, Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski.)

(“Little”) *Fugue in G minor* (organ). The Fugue is called “Little” to distinguish it from the “Great” G minor Fugue listed just above. Stokowski’s arrangement is tasteful. (Recommended recording: V-7437, Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski.)

“*Herzliebster Jesu*,” from the *St. Matthew Passion*, arranged by Charles O’Connell. (Recommended recording: V-18167, Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy.)

“*Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring*,” from church cantata *Herz und Mund*, arranged by Lucien Cailliet, with a strong tendency toward vulgarity. (Recommended recording: V-14973, Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy.)

“*Komm Süßer Tod*,” a movingly poignant melody becomes sluggish in Stokowski’s transcription. (Recommended recording: V-8496, Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski.)

*Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor*. A Respighi version, frequently heard in concert halls, is fussy and loses sight of the epical stature of the music. Stokowski’s celebrated version is much better, though in its closing page it yields to sheer hysteria. (Recommended recording: V-7090-1, Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski.)

*Prelude in B minor*, from the second volume of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, beautifully set for orchestra by Stokowski. (Recommended recording: V-7136, Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski.)

*Prelude, Chorale, and Fugue*, arranged by J. J. Abert, is a hybrid product, more Abert than Bach. The Prelude is the C-sharp minor from the *Well-Tempered Clavier* transposed to the key of B minor. The Chorale is of Abert’s own composition, a pompous piece for two trumpets, four horns, and three trombones. The Fugue is the “Great” G minor organ fugue.

*Prelude in E-flat minor*, from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, eloquently translated for orchestra by Stokowski. (Recommended recording: V-6786, Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski.)

*Prelude and Fugue in E flat* (organ), an unsatisfactory transcription by Schönberg.

*Prelude and Fugue in F minor* (organ), a somewhat ponderous transcription by Cailliet. (Recommended recording: V-14382, Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy.)

*Prelude*, from the *Partita in E major* (unaccompanied violin), well transferred to orchestra by Cailliet. (Recommended recording: V-14973, Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy.)

"*Schafe können sicher weiden*," from the secular cantata *Schlicht spielende weilen*, a poignant transcription by John Barbirolli. (Recommended recording: C-11575, Philharmonic Symphony—Barbirolli.)

*Siciliano*, from Sonata No. 4 (violin and piano), a pointless transcription by Stokowski. (Recommended recording: V-8495, Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy.)

*Tocatta in C major*. A transcription by Eugene Ormandy is somewhat pretentious. An excellent arrangement has been made by Leo Weiner. (Recommended recording: CX-195, Minneapolis Symphony—Mitropoulos.) Stokowski has made a transcription of the Adagio movement alone. (Recommended recording: V-8495, Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski.)

*Tocatta and Fugue in D minor*. Stokowski's arrangement succeeds admirably in conveying to the orchestra the dynamics of the organ. It is dramatic and effective, with a tendency toward bombast. (Recommended recording: V-8697, Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski.)

### Piano Transcriptions

On the whole it can be said that those who have transcribed Bach's music for the piano have been more faithful to the composer's spirit than have the orchestral arrangers. For the most part, transcribers like Tausig, Busoni, and Liszt transferred Bach's works to the piano keyboard with a reverent regard to his original intentions; and, at the same time, they wrote for the piano with a rich harmonic vocabulary and a variety of colors and dynamics which remind us that most of these works originated with the organ. These fine piano transcriptions were potent factors in getting Bach's music accepted during a period when it was far less well known and appreciated than it is today.

Some of the characteristically good transcriptions include the following:

*Chorale Preludes*: "*Ich ruf' zu Dir*," "*In Dir ist Freude*," "*Nun freut Euch*," and "*Wachet auf*," all transcribed by Busoni. (Recommended recording: C-71463D, Petri.)

*Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*, beautifully set for the piano by Myra Hess. (Recommended recording: V-4538, Hess.)

*Prelude*, from *Partita in E major* (unaccompanied violin), arranged by Kelberine. (Recommended recording: VM-330, Kelberine.)

*Prelude and Fugue in A minor*, transcribed by Liszt. (Recommended recording: Decca 25738, Joyce.)

*Prelude and Fugue in E minor*, transcribed by Busoni.

*Tocatta in C major*, brilliantly transcribed by Busoni. (Recommended recording: V-8895-6, Rubinstein.)

*Tocatta and Fugue in D minor*, transcribed by Tausig-Busoni.

### Transcriptions for String Quartet

It can be said that the string-quartet transcriptions which have been made of Bach's music are uniformly unsatisfactory. The limited palette of colors and the restricted dynamics of the string quartet simply do not lend themselves to the pronunciation of Bach's music; and such transcriptions as have been made generally have a monotony which the original does not know.



*Art of the Fugue.* The transference of Bach's study of the fugue has been done skilfully and lucidly by Roy Harris and D. Herter Norton. But the limitations of the string quartet work against an otherwise excellent transcription. (Recommended recording: CM-206, Roth Quartet.)

*Passacaglia in C minor.* Arranged for string quartet by Pochon, this majestic work is pathetically restricted by the string quartet. (Recommended recording: CX-72, Stradivarius Quartet.)

*Toccatà in C major.* Leo Weiner, who made such a remarkable orchestral transcription of this masterpiece, has also adapted it for string quartet but much less successfully. (Recommended recording: C-DB717, Lener Quartet.)

## K. P. E. BACH

KARL PHILIPP EMANUEL BACH, second son of Johann Sebastian and Maria Barbara Bach, b. Weimar, 1714. His father was his only teacher. He was first intended for the law, but in 1738 he abandoned it for music. In 1740 he became Kapellmeister to Frederick the Great, remaining in this post for many years. In 1767 he succeeded Telemann as Kapellmeister in Hamburg. There he died in 1788. During the eighteenth century his fame was so much greater than his father's that to the music world of Western Europe the name Bach denoted Karl Philipp Emanuel—just as, in England, it meant his younger brother Johann Christian, the "London" Bach.

THOUGH Karl Philipp Emanuel Bach was assuredly not of his father's stature, he has his own important place in music's evolution, being the bridge from the era of polyphony (of which his father was so great an exponent) to the homophonic age of Haydn and Mozart. Inheriting the embryonic sonata form from composers like Stamitz, he developed it in his concertos, symphonies, and especially in his piano sonatas to a point where it only awaited the touch of Haydn to come to final crystallization. As Parry wrote: "In his best symphonies, he adopted a line of his own. . . . [His works] have an underlying basis of harmonic form. . . . His management of the various instruments shows considerable skill and clear perception of the effectiveness to which they can be put; and he treats them with thorough independence and variety."

### ORCHESTRAL WORKS

K. P. E. Bach wrote for the orchestra with a fertile pen, producing about eighteen symphonies, fifty-two concertos for piano and orchestra, concertos for other solo instruments and orchestra, concertos for orchestra, and a variety of other orchestral works. Some of this music is particularly important in de-

veloping the as yet immature form of the symphony; much of it has charm and grace and is pleasing to listen to, even if it lacks depth or intensity.

Recommended recording: Symphony in C major, V-12093-4 (NBC String Symphony—Black).

### *Concerto in D Major*

This remarkable example of K. P. E. Bach's genius is now known exclusively through Maximilian Steinberg's adaptation for modern small orchestra. Called a concerto, and sometimes referred to as a suite, it is actually a small symphony in three movements in the style of Stamitz, and it foreshadows the first efforts of Haydn in this direction. The first movement gives a clear indication of the direction that the symphony form is soon to take, for it consists of two clearly enunciated themes which are pronounced, then developed, and finally repeated. In the second movement, we find Bach writing a slow movement more in his father's vein than in Haydn's—an elegiac melody of sweetness and serenity such as Johann Sebastian might have written for a Brandenburg Concerto. The closing movement is in a three-part song form. Steinberg's edition carries the following additional information: "The manuscript of the concerto bears no indication of the date of composition. It is written in four concertante string parts."

Recommended recordings: In the original version, V-1714-5 (American Society of Ancient Instruments—Stad); in Steinberg's transcription, VM-559 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

## PIANO WORKS

Karl Philipp Emanuel is often and rightly regarded as the father of the piano sonata. He established the three-movement form (a slow movement between two fast ones), and in his first movement the sonata design (exposition, development, recapitulation) is often distinctly articulated.

### *For Connoisseurs and Amateurs*

K. P. E. Bach composed a first set of piano sonatas, dedicated to the King of Prussia, which he published in 1742. Two years later appeared a second set, known as the *Württemberg Sonatas*. But his most famous achievement in this genre is the third set, entitled *For Connoisseurs and Amateurs* and published in 1781.

Elsewhere this editor wrote as follows concerning this historic work: "It is here that the sonata form acquired its ultimate crystallization; and it is here that a style of piano writing is evolved—the *galant* style it is called—which forms the basis of Haydn's and Mozart's piano writing. In such a miniature masterpiece as the F minor sonata in the *Connoisseurs* collection, the first movement has achieved a definitely outlined exposition, development and recapitulation. And a beautiful slow movement (almost a song)—a worthy companion to Mozart's slow movements—is sandwiched between two fast ones. Thus the three-movement sonata is definitely established.

"Karl Philipp Emanuel Bach might well be called the first of the great masters of the piano sonata, for he was the first of them definitely to give it a distinct design, such as we know it today. From his sonatas to those of Haydn and Mozart is only a step—not only in the structure and in the style of piano writing, but even in the freshness and charm of his melodic material and the technical fluency with which he developed this material. Both Haydn and Mozart knew the Bach sonatas well, and profited by them, as these composers were not slow in confessing. 'For what I know, I have to thank Philipp Emanuel Bach,' is the tribute of Haydn. And Mozart said: 'He is the father, and we his children. Those of us who know what is right have learned it from him; and those who have not confessed it are scoundrels.'

"Philipp Emanuel Bach's influence reaches even as far as Beethoven. There is something eloquently symbolic about the fact that the opening movement of Philipp Emanuel Bach's F minor sonata bears a striking resemblance to the opening movement of Beethoven's first piano sonata. It is almost as if Beethoven—beginning the composition of his first sonata—were consciously attempting to pay the tribute of imitation to the first master of the form. It is almost as if Beethoven wished it to be known that, now that he was to write piano sonatas, he wished to carry on from where Philipp Emanuel Bach had left off."

Recommended recordings: Sonata in A minor, No. 1, from the *Württemberg Sonatas*, VM-606 (Pessl); Sonata in G major, from *For Connoisseurs and Amateurs*, slow movement only, C-CD831 (Samuel); Sonata in F minor, from *Connoisseurs and Amateurs*, C-CD830 (Samuel); Sonata in G major, from *For Connoisseurs and Amateurs*, Musicraft 1012 (Wolff).

## BALAKIREV

MILY BALAKIREV, founder of the Russian national school, b. Nijni-Novgorod, 1837. Studied music with Oulibishev. In 1854 he met Glinka, who greatly influenced him and who regarded him as his successor in the field of Russian nationalist music. Shortly after 1856, he joined Cui, Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin, and Moussorgsky, the composers known as the "Russian Five"—whose mission it was to write authentic Russian music. In 1862, Balakirev began to direct the St. Petersburg symphony concerts, bringing the compositions of the nationalist school to public attention. On a trip to the Caucasus he discovered its native music and thenceforth used it effectively in his own works. In recognition of his contribution in collecting folk music, he was made Director of the Russian Musical Society. He died in St. Petersburg in 1910.

**B**ALAKIREV's important position in the history of music, and of Russian music in particular, cannot be overestimated. In creating the Russian nationalist school, and serving indefatigably as its godfather and mentor, he exerted an incalculable influence on the development of modern Russian

music. "The importance of the part he played," wrote Liapunov, ". . . is so great as to preclude all comparison and entitles him to the first place in the history of Russian music after Glinka."

However, it would be a mistake to underrate Balakirev's own creative achievements, for he left some works that entitle him to a place of honor in Russian music. "His creative genius had limitations," wrote M. D. Calvo-coressi. "It lacked the capacity for renovation that usually goes with genius, but it was true genius none the less. That wonderful intuitive sense of music . . . enabled him to soar high and also to create a discipline of his own. . . . The few works which represent him at his best justify the assertion that Balakirev the composer stands as high as Balakirev . . . the leader."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Russia*

In 1862, while traveling down the Volga on the way to the Caucasus, Balakirev first conceived the idea of collating Russian folk songs in a permanent and definitive form. It was this undertaking that proved to be the soil for his symphonic poem *Russia*. He wrote two overtures on Russian themes, the second being revised twenty years later (in 1882) and retitled *Russia*.

Balakirev provided his own program notes for *Russia* in the published score: "The inauguration at Novgorod of the monument erected as a memorial of Russia's 1000th anniversary, in 1862, was the occasion for the composition of the present symphonic poem, *Russia*, which in the first edition bore the title *A Thousand Years*. The work is founded on three motives borrowed from my book of Russian folk songs. In it I attempted to express the principal elements of our history: Paganism; the period of Princes and popular government that gave birth to the Cossack régime; and the Muscovite Empire. The struggle among these elements, which ended with the fatal blow struck against Russian nationalistic and religious tendencies by the reforms of Peter I, supplied the subject of this instrumental drama."

The three principal Russian folk melodies used by Balakirev in this work stemmed from Nijni-Novgorod, Samara, and Simbirk. The folk melody from Nijni-Novgorod is a delightful wedding song; those from Samara and Simbirk are dances.

Recommended recording: C-17301 (London Philharmonic—Harty).

### *Tamara*

Balakirev's trip to the Caucasus in 1862 inspired him to write *Tamara*. He loved that region—its local color, its music, its scenic beauties—and he revisited it frequently. In *Tamara*, he attempted to depict all these elements musically. His style lent itself naturally to such an assignment; for its Oriental

color—its disposition toward rich harmonic writing, its brilliant orchestration, its chromaticism, its sensuous melodies—served his subject admirably.

The idea for *Tamara* occurred to him soon after his return from the Caucasus and he began to work on it at once. In 1866–7 he began playing improvisations upon it for his friends. But actual composition proved long and painful, and the work was not pronounced finished until 1881. Its first performance took place in 1882 at a concert of the Free School in St. Petersburg, and it was well received. "A fine, interesting composition," Rimsky-Korsakov called it, "though one that seemed somewhat heavy, patched together, and not altogether devoid of dullish spots." He also thought that its long period of composition militated against it. "The spell of the original improvisations of the late '60's was no longer there. And it could not be otherwise: the piece had been composing for over fifteen years. . . . In fifteen years, a man's entire organism, to the very last cell, changes several times, perhaps. The Balakirev of the '80's was not the Balakirev of the '60's."

*Tamara* was based upon a poem by the Russian poet Lermontov. The beautiful and seductive Queen Tamara, who is evil incarnate, lives in a high tower on the River Terek. She lures passing travelers into her tower to partake of her feasts; but the next morning they are always found dead in the river.

Tamara's beauty is described musically by a sinuous Oriental subject woven through the work. Balakirev writes programmatically with skill and vividness, describing in the music the flow of the Terek (with which the composition opens), the approach of the travelers and their willing response to Tamara's poignant and haunting call, and the revelry of the feast which is only a prelude to the tragic *dénouement*.

Recommended recording: V-11349-50 (Paris Conservatory Orchestra—Coppola).

## PIANO MUSIC

### *Islamey*

It might justly be said that Balakirev's Oriental fantasy for piano is his masterpiece. Nowhere else does he reveal so consummate a command of his form, so felicitous a fusion of his style and poetic feeling. Like *Tamara*, *Islamey* was inspired by the Caucasus, and is Oriental in its spirit, in its lavish harmonic colors, and in the character of the melodic subjects derived directly from Caucasian folk music. Rimsky-Korsakov notes that soon after Balakirev's return from the Caucasus, he "frequently played two Oriental themes." These two themes—one in D-flat major, and the other in D major—he incorporated into his piano fantasy, using them with ingenuity. His writing for the piano is particularly brilliant and shows that he learned more than one valuable lesson from Liszt, whom he admired profoundly.

Recommended recording: V-14028 (Barer).

## SONGS

Balakirev made notable contributions to Russian song literature. In her analysis of his songs, Rosa Newmarch wrote: "They are little gems, cut in innumerable facets, of which each reflects an exquisite and subtle emotion. The accompaniments to these songs resemble the setting of a jewel—they are independent, but they enhance, they complete the musical thought which glistens in the center. Such are, for example, *'When Thy Beloved Voice I Hear,' 'Come to Me,' 'Lead Me, O Night,' 'Ecstasy,' 'The Song of the Golden Fish,' 'The Song of Selim,' 'Georgian Song.'* Some of them recreate marvelously the very atmosphere of the Orient. Nearly all these songs are emotional to a high degree and replete with an ardent sentiment of the triumph of love. *'A Hebrew Melody'* is more subdued in mood. . . . It is impossible to dismiss the subject of his songs without mentioning his *'Berceuse,'* a melody as simple and ingenuous as a folk song with a delicate accompaniment such as only he could devise."

# BARBER

SAMUEL BARBER, b. West Chester, Pa., 1910. Studied at the Curtis Institute, from which he was graduated in 1932. He won the Prix de Rome in 1935, and the Pulitzer Prize in music in 1935 and 1936. In 1939, he became a member of the faculty of the Curtis Institute. Soon after Pearl Harbor, he joined the American armed forces.

A SUAVE style combined with elegant workmanship has made Barber one of the major new voices to appear in American music within the past two decades. He is regarded as a conservative composer, because he is more concerned with expressing his inmost feelings unashamedly than with embarking on new forms and novel experiments. But he utilizes the fullest resources of modern writing. His outstanding trait is his capacity to project subtle moods and atmospheres. His is a deeply poetic temperament reflected in everything he has written.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

Barber's orchestral music is marked by transparency of writing and by the succinctness with which he projects his ideas. Because he writes simply and is not afraid of his emotions, his music is easily assimilable on first hearing, and it has the power to move the listener.

*Adagio for Strings*

Written in 1937, and introduced at a concert of the NBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Arturo Toscanini, on November 5, 1938, the *Adagio for Strings* sustains a poetic mood throughout, and is one of the most poignant works by an American composer in recent years. Sibelius, who saw the manuscript, remarked: "I am glad to say that I consider this music excellent. . . . [It is] . . . good art, and especially do I like its simplicity."

*Essay*

The *Essay* was written in the same year as the *Adagio* (1937), and was given its world première at the same concert in which the latter work was introduced (November 5, 1938, the NBC Symphony Orchestra directed by Toscanini). This work has the distinction of being the first by an American to be performed by Toscanini and the NBC Orchestra. It is built upon a series of simple themes, which are developed with subtlety and effect. The work opens Andante Sostenuto, which yields to an Allegro Molto. A scherzando section is followed by a vigorous climax. The end of the work re-establishes the opening mood by reiterating the first bars of the Andante Sostenuto. The work has the compactness of form of a fine literary essay, its inevitable logic of development and evolution, and its clarity of thinking.

Recommended recording: V-18062 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy).

## SYMPHONY

*Symphony in One Movement*

Written in 1935, it was given its first performance by the Augusteo Orchestra in Rome, under Bernardino Molinari, in December 1936. The composer described the work as a "synthetic treatment of a four-movement classical symphony." Four sections are integrated into one movement. Three themes are stated at the opening of the work, and are developed throughout the composition. *Symphony in One Movement* was the first work of an American composer to be played at the famous Salzburg Festivals (conducted by Artur Rodzinski), where it was given an ovation.

On March 8, 1944, the Philharmonic Society of New York, conducted by Bruno Walter, introduced a revised version of this symphony. An entirely new scherzo section replaced the old one, and other minor changes were made in the construction and scoring of the other movements.

Recommended recording: CMX-252 (New York Philharmonic—Walter).

# BARTOK

BÉLA BARTÓK, foremost living Hungarian composer, b. Nagyszentmiklós, Hungary, 1881. Studied music in Pressburg, then at the Royal Academy in Budapest, to whose faculty he was appointed as professor in 1907. He had meanwhile become interested in Hungarian folk music and had begun the fruitful series of travels throughout Hungary which resulted in his collecting thousands of songs indigenous to that country. As a composer, he first achieved success in 1917 with a ballet, *The Wooden Prince*. Shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War, Bartók settled in the United States.

**B**ÉLA BARTÓK's interest in and preoccupation with Hungarian folk music has considerably influenced his own style as a composer. The real Hungarian music, which he discovered, is quite other than the meretricious gypsy music exploited by Brahms and Liszt: its melodies, built on old modes, are harsher and severer in line, its spirit is passionate and virile. And Bartók's model for his own works is this Hungarian folk music. At first hearing, his music is usually not pleasant to listen to, for it is disjointed (particularly in his later works), full of sharp and incisive sounds, with melodic subjects that sound barbaric. He is intensely modern in his use of tonality and harmony, and his compositions are original music, the product of a complex intelligence, demanding familiarity before they can be understood and appreciated.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Dance Suite*

This is one of Bartók's best-known works for orchestra. Composed in 1923 for the fiftieth anniversary of the union of the cities of Buda and Pesth and first performed at a festival held that year in Budapest, it has since been played by most of the major orchestras in America and Europe. The Suite contains five movements: Allegro Vivace, Poco Adagio, Presto, Moderato, Molto Vivace. They are played without interruption. A "ritornello" theme is used as a catalyzing agent to unify the work.

The most striking feature of this work is its curious rhythms. "The ordinary 4/4 time yields in Bartók's hands surprising effects," writes Hugo Leichtentritt. "The *ostinato* rhythms so frequent in Russian music are a regular component of Bartók's music. How cleverly he turns the ordinary monotony of these *ostinato* figures into quite surprising and charming impressions can be easily shown."

### *Divertimento*

It is a pleasing Bartók that we find in this work, a Bartók less given to barbaric passions and stinging dissonances, and more to agreeable sonorities. It was composed in 1939, and was introduced in Basle, Switzerland, on May 1940. It is in three movements, a middle Molto Adagio movement separated



# BEETHOVEN

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN, b. Bonn, 1770. Began studying music at the age of four. In 1781 he published his first works. Soon after this he began to achieve note as an improviser on the piano. He settled in Vienna in 1792, which became his home for the rest of his life. He studied briefly with Haydn and Albrechtsberger. Following his first public appearance in 1795, he soon attained a name as a piano virtuoso. His reputation as a pianist was soon superseded by that as a composer, and he became the darling of Viennese aristocracy. The year 1800 marked the beginning of a new and fruitful phase in Beethoven's creative development, his so-called second period. At the same time, the realization that he was growing deaf brought on despondency, eloquently expressed in his Heiligenstadt Testament. Deafness, however, did not interfere with either his creative power or the quantity of his productions. He died in Vienna in 1827, and his funeral was attended by thousands of admirers.

**B**EETHOVEN played a more decisive role in the evolution of music than any other single figure, not excepting Bach. It is only necessary to compare his earliest works with his last ones to recognize what progress the art of music made in his time—and largely owing to him. He liberated the classical forms from their former restrictions, giving them altogether new expanse and flexibility. He brought to the art of music depths of expressiveness it had not known before. He brought new richness of speech to every instrument for which he wrote. In short, he brought the art of music to modernity. He stands, as Parry wrote, "at the turning point of the ways of modern art, and combines the sum of past human efforts in the direction of musical design with the first ripe utterance of modern impulse—made possible by the accumulation of artistic resources—in the direction of human expression. After him, the course of things naturally changed. . . . Beethoven expresses the complete emancipation of human emotion and mind, and attempts to give expression to every kind of mood of inner sensibility which is capable and worthy of being brought into the circuit of an artistic scheme and design."

Beethoven's artistic career is commonly divided into three distinct periods. The first, ending in about 1800, was that of apprenticeship, in which he was still comparatively subservient to the forms and idioms of Haydn and Mozart—though it must be emphasized that his own strong personality was even then asserting itself. He had assimilated the speech of his great predecessors and was now adumbrating the future potentialities of his art.

Deafness brought on the second period. "I am now making a fresh start," he wrote at the time. Fresh start indeed! In 1803 and 1804 alone he produced the *Kreutzer* Sonata for violin and piano, the *Waldstein* and the *Appassionata* sonatas for piano, and the *Eroica* Symphony! During this second period, moreover, he composed the Fourth, the Fifth, and the *Pastoral* symphonies; the opera *Fidelio*; the Rasumovsky Quartets, the Fourth and Fifth piano concertos, and the Violin Concerto.

With these works, musical form had now been raised to its highest point of development and extension thus far. More important still, Beethoven had

refined and enriched his own speech to a point where it was now touched with poetry. "Music is no longer sonority pure and simple," as Paul Bekker wrote. "It contains abstract ideas. . . . The idea . . . determines the character of the work and . . . makes possible the further development of harmonic music."

After 1817 came Beethoven's third and last period, that of the Ninth Symphony, the *Missa Solemnis*, and the last piano sonatas and string quartets. In these works, Beethoven becomes the seer and the mystic, surveying the world in music that is as unorthodox for its form as for its style.

To understand Beethoven's ruthless defiance of tradition and conventions, to appreciate the extent of his magnificent self-assurance in striking out new and uncharted paths, it is always necessary to remember that the music was the reflection of the man. He was the republican, the very spirit of the French Revolution, who considered himself the equal of nobility. "I, too, am king!" he cried, not out of arrogance but out of a deep conviction that all men are equal. Toward his benefactors, Beethoven was impetuous, bumptious, even rude. He could never bend the knee to anyone. At the sight of Goethe assuming an obsequious pose before royalty, he growled: "It is they who must make way for us, not we for them!" He was sublimely self-assured, the very personification of the creative ego. "With whom need I be afraid of measuring my strength?" he wrote early in his career. He was driven by powerful creative impulses. "What weighs on my heart, I must express, I must write!"

## CONCERTOS

### Piano Concertos

In the piano-concerto form it took Beethoven longer to free himself from his subservience to Mozart than in any other form. He composed the first of his piano concertos in 1795, but because of its later publication (Opus 19) it is now known as Beethoven's Second Concerto; while his C major Concerto (Op. 15) composed at a later (and unknown) date is now spoken of as the First. These two concertos, as well as the third in C minor (Op. 37), composed in 1800, are children of the eighteenth century in their formality, classical manner, graceful idiom, lucidity of speech. In these three concertos, the piano delights in virtuosity for its own sake. They are not without esthetic interest, and in their frequent performances in our symphony halls they bring music lovers pleasure. But they are Beethoven in borrowed clothing, and though occasionally we may briefly recognize the Beethoven identity, we are always conscious of the masquerade.

Five years separate the Third and the Fourth concertos—years of momentous significance in Beethoven's life. These were the years in which his awareness of oncoming deafness brought on Titanic struggles with his soul, but they were also the years of full artistic maturing in which the epic

poet emerged. Thus the Fourth Concerto finds Beethoven at the height of his creative powers, and ushers in a new day for the piano concerto.

Recommended recordings: Concerto No. 1, CM-308 (Giesecking; Berlin State Opera Chorus—Setti); *"In des Lebens Frühlingstagen,"* Decca 20452 (Laholm). Philharmonic—Sargent); Concerto No. 3, VM-1016 (Rubinstein; NBC Orchestra—Toscanini).

### *Concerto No. 4 in G major*

Here the iconoclast is not slow in making his presence felt: the very opening of the G-major concerto (Op. 58) shatters tradition by prefacing the usual orchestral introduction by a piano solo that states the first principal subject of the movement. The orchestra adopts the theme and develops it with a feeling for drama and climax. A new subject in the minor key (the second theme of the movement, more lyrical in character, but stately) is then introduced by the violins. These two themes are developed along the monumental lines established by the symphonies of this period; surely the piano concertos of Mozart never knew such ingenuity and grandeur in the elaboration of thematic material. Virtuosity as such is banished (except in the cadenza which closes the movement), as the poetic idea acquires enlargement and release. This poetic idea rises to Alpine heights of eloquence in the second movement (*Andante con moto*), a dialogue between piano and orchestra in which a subject of defiant character by the orchestra is answered by accents of resignation in the piano. It is almost as if Fate had dictated to Beethoven what was now in store for him, and as if he were answering it with the peace of the man who has resolved his inner struggles into harmony. The concerto closes with a Rondo full of gusto and spirit, which reminds us that Beethoven was capable not only of sublimity but also of an "unbuttoned humor" of rare infectiousness.

Beethoven completed the concerto in 1806, dedicating it to the Archduke Rudolph of Austria; and it was first performed in March 1807 at a concert in the palace of Prince Lobkowitz, one of Beethoven's patrons.

Recommended recording: CM-411 (Giesecking; Saxon State Orchestra—Böhm).

### *Concerto No. 5 in E-flat, "Emperor"*

The majestic proportions of Beethoven's last piano concerto, Op. 73, has earned it the sobriquet by which it is now known. It is, indeed, the emperor of Beethoven's piano concertos, for it is the most ambitious realization of solo concerto writing, approaching symphonic breadth. It was composed in 1809, a year of momentous significance in Vienna, for the city was being besieged by the French.

The first public performance of the *Emperor* is believed to have taken place in Leipzig in 1811, at which time the critic of the *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* wrote, with rare penetration, that it was "without a doubt one of the most original, imaginative, effective, but most difficult of all existing con-

certos." Its first Vienna performance took place on February 12, 1812, with Karl Czerny as soloist.

A powerful chord by full orchestra opens the first movement, following which a brief piano cadenza introduces the orchestral prelude, in which the two principal subjects are introduced. Once again, as in the Fourth Concerto, the development of the thematic material is along vast lines in which Beethoven's flair for the dramatic is omnipresent. The second movement is a set of "quasi" variations on a majestic theme presented at the very opening of the movement by the strings. The Rondo is jovial.

Recommended recording: CM-500 (Serkin; Philharmonic Symphony—Bruno Walter).

### Violin Concerto

#### *Concerto in D major*

Beethoven composed but one concerto for violin and orchestra (Op. 61). It is as if he realized that he had, with this one work, exhausted the artistic possibilities of the form, and that any other effort in this direction would be only static. Certainly it is an epic work, dwarfing all earlier violin concertos.

A symphonic orchestral introduction opens with four drum beats (it is said that this subject for tympani came to Beethoven on hearing someone knock at the door), which point to the first theme, voiced by the reeds. The second subject, also spoken by the reeds, follows a brief development. These two subjects are used with an amazing richness of imagination. It is a long development, symphonic in its proportions, large in scope and aspirations, in which the melodic and polyphonic invention seems inexhaustible. A Larghetto brings a brief interval of repose: the orchestra sings a melody of quiet and tender beauty which the violin embellishes with picturesque figurations. A brief cadenza then leads directly to a Rondo, the principal theme of which has the character of a peasant dance. In contrast with it is a sentimental melody played by the violin.

Composed in 1806, the concerto was introduced by Franz Clement at the Theater-an-der-Wien on December 23 of that year. The violinist was compelled to read the work at sight, because Beethoven retained the manuscript until the last possible moment for revisions.

Recommended recording: VM-705 (Heifetz; NBC Symphony—Toscanini).

### MASS

#### *Missa Solemnis*

Of Beethoven's works cast in a spacious and extended mould, the *Missa Solemnis*, Op. 123—fruit of the composer's last years—is one of the most ambitious. In five sections—*Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Sanctus*, and *Agnus Dei*—it

is monumental in its structure; and it contains some of Beethoven's most eloquent music.

It is well to remember the inscription that Beethoven wrote on the opening page of the work: "*Von Herzen—möge es zu Herzen gehen*" ("It comes from the heart, may it reach the heart"). For the work has great emotional intensity. It is not a religious work in the sense that Bach's Passions and Mass were; one fails to detect in the *Missa Solemnis* either the spiritual exaltation or the devout humility which Bach infused into his music. For Beethoven was not the man to bow to anyone—even to God. The music of the *Missa Solemnis* is music of passionate and magnificent strength (*Gloria* and *Credo*), in which Beethoven seems to assert proudly that there is something of God in him as well. Let us say that the religion of the *Missa Solemnis* is not that of the formal church, but that of the human spirit which must assert itself proudly and defiantly as an expression of the ego. Yet there are also pages of beautiful repose (the "Benedictus" of the *Sanctus*, and the *Agnus Dei*)—not the tranquillity that comes from having found a spiritual haven but that which comes from inner peace.

The *Missa Solemnis* was intended by the composer as a musical tribute to Archduke Rudolph for performance during the ceremonies attending his enthronement as the Archbishop of Olmütz. The composition of this vast work proved much more onerous and exacting than Beethoven anticipated, and not one but three years were required for it; thus it was two years too late for its original purpose. Three sections of the Mass were first introduced in Vienna on May 8, 1824, at the same concert which saw the première of the Ninth Symphony.

Recommended recording: VM-758, 759 (Boston Symphony, Harvard Glee Club, Radcliffe Choral Society, Soloists—Koussevitzky).

## OPERA

### *Fidelio*

In two acts, libretto by Joseph Sonnleithner and Georg Friedrich Treitschke, first performed at the Theater-an-der-Wien on November 20, 1805.

Schikaneder, then director of the Theater-an-der-Wien, first commissioned Beethoven to write an opera for his theater in 1803. The competitive Court Opera was about to present a new opera by the well-favored Cherubini, and Schikaneder shrewdly decided to counter such an attraction with one of his own—by Vienna's most famous composer. A change of directorship at the Theater-an-der-Wien caused a temporary delay in the creation of Beethoven's opera. Eventually, however, Schikaneder resumed a directorial post, and a new contract was drawn up with Beethoven. He was now specifically assigned to set to music Sonnleithner's adaptation of a French play by Bouilly entitled *Léonore, ou l'amour conjugal*.

It was Beethoven's first (and only) effort in the operatic field, and he ex-

pended tears and blood upon it. "This work," as he later explained, "has won me the martyr's crown." The work challenged his powers, and haunted him. He worked on it, and reworked it, with the most painstaking care: he rewrote one aria as many as eighteen times. Beethoven, the supreme dramatist of the symphonies and the piano sonatas, was now writing his first work for the actual theater. He was faced with a comparatively feeble book, but he was trying to convert it into an affirmation of Love and Freedom.

The story of *Fidelio* concerns the unjust imprisonment of the Spanish nobleman, Florestan, by his enemy, Pizarro, governor of a Madrid prison. Florestan's wife, Leonore, disguises herself as a man and finds employment as assistant to the jailer, Rocco. Meanwhile, Minister Fernando comes on a tour of inspection. Pizarro, fearing that Fernando will come upon Florestan's undeserved incarceration, decides to kill his victim. He orders Rocco to dig a grave in Florestan's cell, and Leonore is called upon to help in this task. Leonore descends into the caverns and there sees her husband semi-delirious for want of food, air, and light. She controls her emotion and assists Rocco in digging the grave. When Pizarro is about to stab Florestan, she points a pistol at Pizarro and threatens him with immediate death. At that moment, a loud flourish of trumpets announces the arrival of Fernando. Pizarro rushes out of the cell to welcome his distinguished visitor as Leonore and Florestan ecstatically embrace each other. Pizarro is sent to disgrace by Fernando, and Leonore and Florestan are joyfully reunited in freedom.

To Beethoven, Leonore was a symbol of freedom who, in setting Florestan free from the darkness of his cell, likewise liberates all other prisoners. One of the great pages in the opera—one of the noblest pages in all opera—is the emergence of the prisoners out of their cells into the sunlight. They sing a paean to freedom which is Beethoven's greatest democratic pronouncement.

*Fidelio* was first performed at the Theater-an-der-Wien at an unfortunate hour. The French had entered Vienna, and the court had fled to Schönbrunn. An economic crisis had followed political confusion, bringing with it hunger and terror. Thus the city was hardly in the mood for a new opera. At the first performance the audience comprised mostly French soldiers. *Fidelio* was a failure. Cherubini, who was in the audience, spoke critically of the brusqueness of the opera and of Beethoven's graceless writing for the voices.

The work was taken off, and Beethoven's friends prevailed upon him to make extensive revisions. He compressed three acts into two, simplified the vocal writing, and prepared an altogether new overture. In this form it was reintroduced at the Theater-an-der-Wien on March 29, 1806. Vienna was again at peace, and the audience was now able to welcome a work of art. The opera might have enjoyed a long and profitable run but for Beethoven's irascible temper and lack of tact. He accused the opera house of robbing him of royalties due him, and then, in a violent fit of temper, insisted upon the removal of the opera from the repertory.

Not until May 23, 1814, was *Fidelio* heard again, this time at the Kärntnerthortheater in Vienna. With this, its success was permanently established.

Paul Bekker emphasizes the fact that, though there are magnificent pages in *Fidelio*, it is not altogether successful as operatic writing. "Beethoven's *Fidelio* is the greatest example of the impossibility of approaching the theater to form opera out of any other force than the element of the singing voice. . . . He [Beethoven] believed in the possibility of opera as a field for the intellect, as a bearer of ideas. With details that did not suit his purpose and were nevertheless indispensable to the action he tried to effect a compromise. He wanted to lift them into his own sphere, for he needed them. . . . Although thanks to the impetuous force that resides in it, it established itself upon the stage, it has never really captured the theater."

Despite its faults, *Fidelio* remains one of Beethoven's great works. It is more symphonic than vocal in character, with many ungrateful pages for the singers, and at random intervals it is passingly reminiscent of Mozart. But in its greatest moments—the sublime Prisoners' Chorus, or Florestan's cry of despair that opens the second act—it is of Olympian stature. Other memorable pages (besides the monumental Leonore Overture No. 3) are the quartet, "*Mir ist so wunderbar*," the soprano recitative and aria "*Abscheulicher, wo eilst du hin?*," and the Prisoners' Chorus "*O welche Lust*"—all from Act I.

For the various overtures that Beethoven employed for *Fidelio*, see below under Orchestral Music.

Recommended recordings: "*Abscheulicher, wo eilst du hin?*," V-14972 (Flagstad; Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy); "*O welche Lust*," V-11249 (Metropolitan Opera Chorus—Setti); "*In des Lebens Frühlingstagen*," Decca 20452 (Laholm).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Coriolanus* and *Egmont* Overtures

It is strange, indeed, that Beethoven—of whom it was said that he was more symphonic than dramatic in his opera *Fidelio*—might almost be said to be more dramatic than symphonic in his orchestral overtures. What Wagner said of the Leonore Overture No. 3 can be applied with equal aptness to the *Coriolanus* and *Egmont* overtures: they are self-contained music dramas, with an unerring sense for good theater in the matter of conflicts and climaxes, and with a fine feeling for characterization. The portrait of Coriolanus—presented in the opening subject of the overture which follows the introductory chords—combines heroism with restlessness; while the overture itself progresses to a high emotional pitch culminating with a powerful Coda standing for Coriolanus's death (notice how the Coriolanus theme evaporates into space, descriptive of the fading breath of the hero).

Composed in 1807, the *Coriolanus* Overture, Op. 62, was intended by Beethoven not for the Shakespearean tragedy but for a German play by Heinrich Josef von Collins.

The *Egmont* Overture, Op. 84, composed in 1809–10, is one of several pieces that Beethoven wrote as incidental music for Goethe's play. A hero in the struggle for the liberation of the Netherlands from Spain, the Count

of *Egmont* was executed as a result of an infamous conspiracy. The heroism of the man, the strength and nobility of his character, speak out unmistakably in the majestic opening for strings. The *Egmont* Overture, together with other incidental pieces (including four entr'actes and two songs), was first performed at the presentation of the Goethe play at the Burgtheater in Vienna on May 24, 1810.

Recommended recordings: *Coriolanus* Overture, V-12535 (London Symphony—Walter); *Egmont* Overture, C-69195D (Vienna Philharmonic—Weingartner).

### *Fidelio* and *Leonore* Overtures

Beethoven composed four different overtures for *Fidelio*, concerning whose chronological order some confusion exists. The *Leonore* Overture No. 2, Op. 72, was the one which served as the prelude for the original performance of the opera. In his extensive revision, Beethoven discarded this overture and wrote an entirely new one, built on the same thematic material—the *Leonore* Overture No. 3, Op. 72, now considered one of his mightiest orchestral works. The *Leonore* Overture No. 1, Op. 138, is a simplification of No. 3 and was probably intended for a Prague performance of the opera which never materialized. When *Fidelio* was revived in Vienna in 1814, Beethoven composed a fourth overture, this time with entirely new thematic subjects; this overture is today known as the *Fidelio* Overture, Op. 72.

Gustav Mahler established the precedent now generally accepted. The *Fidelio* Overture is used to open the performance, while the *Leonore* No. 3—which seems to embody within itself all the dramatic conflicts of the play so aptly that Wagner spoke of it as a music-drama in itself—is interpolated as an orchestral interlude between the first and the second scenes of Act 2.

Recommended recordings: *Fidelio* Overture, V-11809 (B.B.C. Symphony—Walter); *Leonore* Overture No. 1, V-15945 (B.B.C. Symphony—Toscanini); *Leonore* Overture No. 2, CX-96 (London Symphony—Weingartner); *Leonore* Overture No. 3, VS2 (NBC Symphony—Toscanini).

## PIANO MUSIC

(For Concertos, see above: Concertos, Piano; for Sonatas, see below: Sonatas, Piano.)

### *Variations on a Theme of Diabelli*

Beethoven's thirty-three variations on a theme of Diabelli (Op. 120) is his last, and crowning, work for the piano. It has been referred to as Beethoven's *Art of the Fugue*, for just as Bach dedicated his last work to a final resumé of the inexhaustible possibilities of the fugue form, so Beethoven in this work attempted to display the richness of invention that could go into the form of theme and variations. Beethoven composed the work in 1823 as the result of an invitation by Diabelli, who was publishing a volume in which a number of composers (Schubert among them) were each to contribute his variations



on a single theme of Diabelli's own creation. Beethoven was not amenable to any collaborative projects, but offered instead to write an entire volume of his own variations on Diabelli's theme; and Diabelli accepted the offer eagerly.

The theme is a trite and stereotyped little waltz. Yet with what aristocracy of style, alternation of moods, richness of texture Beethoven developed and enlarged a petty subject into shapes and forms of infinite variety! Ernest Walker wrote: "The merely melodic connection is secondary or indeed frequently non-existent: harmony and structure are the chief essential points, and though these may be altered to almost any extent, yet there is always, so to speak, the same intellectual thread running through the whole; and in place of the old rigid and merely decorative ideal, we have an ideal of unity in diversity, of the same subject presented in continually shifting and new lights." The thirty-three variations seem to explore the entire range of pianistic writing, expressing moods that range from the meditative and pensive to the whimsical, from the tranquil to the dramatic, from the majestic to the capricious.

## QUARTETS

Beethoven wrote sixteen quartets which are among the greatest works in that branch of musical literature. Within the string quartet, even more than in the symphonies and piano sonatas, Beethoven uttered his profoundest and most intimate thoughts. In the quartet he could write without considering virtuosity—for virtuosity as such never enters into chamber-music performance. Besides, the quartet is capable of speaking pure musical language with a lucidity and clarity that made it particularly appropriate for voicing Beethoven's most personal moods and ideas.

The sixteen quartets can be roughly classified into three groups: the first, including the six Opus 18 quartets, represent the early Beethoven who absorbed the forms and speech of Haydn and Mozart and then began to use them for his own purposes; the second include the *Rasumovsky* quartets Op. 59, the "Harp" Quartet, Op. 74, and the Quartet Op. 95—the mature Beethoven of the fabulous middle period of his creative career; in the third, we find the quartets Opp. 127, 130, 131, 132, 135, and the *Grosse Fuge*, in which Beethoven is the mystic searching for new worlds and achieving a philosophic depth, and at times a sublimity, never before heard in music.

### *Quartets Op. 18*

The six quartets in the Opus 18 group bear the same relation to the later string quartets that the first symphony does to the other eight. The form is Mozart's, and so are some of the stylistic traits of writing for the instruments. But it is a mistake to consider these quartets Mozartean. Beethoven's per-

sonality, perhaps not yet so clearly defined as in the later quartets, is in many pages of these works, restless for new facets of musical expression.

Beethoven began sketching the first outlines of these quartets in 1794-5, but the entire set was not completed until 1800. It was published in 1801, and was dedicated to Prince Lobkowitz. The first of these quartets to be written was not the No. 1, as now numbered, but the No. 3. The No. 1 was subjected by Beethoven to painstaking revision. "I have only just learned how to write quartets properly," he announced to a friend when the final revision was over.

Beethoven did not begin writing his first string quartet until he had essayed other experiments in chamber music. He wrote several trios, and a quintet, before he turned to a field in which Haydn and Mozart had achieved such heights. Knowing as we do his profound admiration for these two composers—Mozart, particularly—he must have approached his first quartet with no little misgiving. Yet he did not permit his reverence for Mozart to constrict him and his individuality. There are sections even as early as the Op. 18 No. 1 in which Beethoven sets out fearlessly in his own direction, both in the freedom with which he uses his forms, and in the independence with which he presents his melodic thoughts.

Discussing Opus 18, Robert Haven Schauffler has written: "This . . . has become almost the backbone of quartet literature. Why? For one thing, because it is such fun to explore. Its kaleidoscopic unexpectedness rewards you. The wit and humour is dovetailed—or rather, dove-necked—with elusive attitudes of such iridescent loveliness. The hidden treasure caches are forever yielding something new in ground you have already passed over a hundred times. . . ."

"In the last three Lobkowitz quartets there are distinct thematic echoes, almost borrowings, from the rococo masters. But the first three are much more consistently in the spirit of these masters. The opening movement of the F major (No. 1) is more cut and dried than anything else in the whole series; although at the 30th bar it brings to light a charming example of a concealed counter subject. . . . But the intensity of tragic passion in the great *Adagio* is a worthy forerunner of the *Adagio* of that other F major Quartet, the first *Rasumovsky*.

"Opus 18, No. 2 is known as the *Komplimentierung* or "Compliment" Quartet, because its opening might suggest an elaborate reception at some rococo court. . . . The gem of the fourth quartet (in C minor) is the opening movement. Though the principal theme bears a close resemblance to the basic tune of the *Sonate Pathétique*, there is nothing *pathétique* about this virile, self-assured music. It is the precursor of the Ajax-defying-the-thunder mood we are to meet with in the first movements of the *Eroica* and the C minor symphonies.

"Here was an utterance straight from the innermost heart of the young

Master. A new note had been struck. A deeper level of the psyche, heretofore voiceless, had been reached and set free for musical expression.

"In the *scherzo* of the B flat quartet (No. 6) we catch Beethoven in the act of stealing the Twentieth Century's thunder by inventing the first piece of jazz. For this *scherzo* is brimful of the subtle, catchy syncopations, the bizarre wit, and the perversely independent part-writing which most people imagine to be the popular invention of the 1920's.

"From start to finish of the Lobkowitz quartets one can see Beethoven progressively drawing away from his musical forebears and coming easily, naturally into his own. . . . Certain tone colours, certain emotional strata, appear at this point for the first time in quartet literature. And a daring hand shows crisply here and there through the traditional form. The *Adagio* of the G major (No. 2) is interrupted by a pert little *scherzo* episode. And the curious slow introduction to the *finale* of the B flat (No. 6) . . . reappears twice amid its rollicking Ländler-like tunes. . . . Op. 18 was the first real *chef d'œuvre* of the youth of a supreme creative artist."

Recommended recordings: VM-550, VM-622, VM-650, VM-696, VM-716, VM-745 (Coolidge Quartet).

### *Rasumovsky Quartets, Op. 59*

The classicism of the Op. 18 quartets is here succeeded by an ardent romanticism. The poetic idea in the Op. 59 quartets becomes more important than the form, and one feels throughout them that it is trying to shake itself free from the restrictions of formal structure. This is the Beethoven of the middle period, the volatile Beethoven who passes from stormy moods to moments of tranquillity. This is Beethoven the dramatist, who can create suspense, build climaxes, and invoke surprising contrasts with an unerring sense for good theater. Above everything else, this is the poetic Beethoven, concerned first and foremost with the articulation of his innermost thoughts and reveries.

What Dannreuther wrote about Beethoven's symphonies applies so aptly to the *Rasumovsky Quartets* that it is profitable to read his words in connection with these quartet masterpieces. "We feel that we are in the presence of something far wider and higher than the mere development of musical themes. The execution in detail of each movement and each succeeding work is modified more and more by the prevailing poetic sentiment. A religious passion and elevation are present in the utterances. The mental and moral horizon of the music grows upon us with each renewed hearing. The different movements—like the different particles of each movement—have as close a connection with one another as the acts of a tragedy, and a characteristic significance to be understood only in relation to the whole; each work is in the full sense of the word a revelation. Beethoven speaks a language no one has spoken before, and treats of things no one has dreamt of before; yet it seems as though he were speaking of matters long familiar, in one's mother tongue;

as though he touched upon emotions one had lived through in some former existence."

The three quartets in Op. 59 were commissioned by Count Rasumovsky, the Russian ambassador to Austria, in 1806; and it was in deference to his patron that Beethoven inserted Russian melodies in the first two quartets: the finale of the First, and the third movement of the Second. The "Thème russe" in the First, indeed, is the same tune that Mussorgsky gave to the chorus in the Coronation Scene of *Boris Godunov*.

The three quartets are in F major (No. 1)—the most dramatic of the three, and revolutionary in its use of the sonata form in all four movements; in E minor (No. 2)—the most tragic of the trio, the Molto Adagio movement being one of the most poignant musical utterances in quartet literature; and in C major (No. 3)—sometimes known as the "Hero" Quartet.

Recommended recordings: F major Quartet, No. 1, VM-804 (Coolidge Quartet); E minor Quartet, No. 2, VM-340 (Budapest Quartet); C major Quartet, No. 3, VM-171 (Busch Quartet).

### *Quartet Op. 74, "Harp"*

Beethoven's tenth quartet, in E flat major, was composed two years after the Op. 59 set. "Here," wrote Joseph de Marliave, "we find none of the outward brilliance of effect, the deliberate objectivity, and the pure technical beauty of the three quartets of the earlier group. Here one sees mirrored in the music the dark places of the artist's own soul; here at last Beethoven finds expression for all his pent-up love and sorrow, plumbing the depth of his unsatisfied longings, laying bare the secret beauty of his inmost thoughts. At the same time he evokes a fuller expressive richness from the genre of the quartet than ever hitherto. . . . In Op. 74 there is so perfect a union between the thought of the artist and its expression through the medium of the string quartet, that one can imagine no other medium to take its place."

We can arrive at a maturer understanding of this Quartet if we remember that it was written during a period of great emotional crisis. The year of 1809 was a difficult one for Vienna: The French army was at the city gate; the Austrian court had fled; and terror, confusion, and starvation stalked the streets. It was an even more difficult year for Beethoven. The absence of the Viennese nobility deprived him of the source of his income. Besides this, he was afraid that the thunder of the French cannon would further impair his hearing; he used to hide in terror in the cellar. Finally, he was torn by anguish at the obstacles placed in the way of his seeing and being with his beloved, Therese von Brunswick.

The very opening of the quartet (Poco Adagio) betrays Beethoven's emotional state at the time. It is melancholy in mood, full of controlled tensions and restrained but poignant feelings. The same mood of eloquent suffering is maintained in the beautiful song of the second movement (Adagio ma non troppo). In the third movement (Presto) we have the more forceful Beethoven,

fighting savagely against complete surrender to his melancholia. The final movement proceeds without interruption after the Presto and is a set of variations on a supple and graceful melody—the variations going through the gamut of human feelings, from boisterousness to tenderness, from power to elegiac softness.

The Quartet is named "Harp" because in the first movement the principal melody is distributed among the four instruments, pizzicato, simulating the playing of a harp.

Recommended recording: VM-467 (Budapest Quartet).

### *Quartet Op. 95, "Serious"*

Nohl speaks of this F-minor quartet as the most intimate of Beethoven's works. Concise, compact, simply projected, it is intensely expressive. "We find here," says Helm, "the dramatist's economy of words, and the quartet is often reminiscent of the spirit . . . of Gluck." It was composed in 1810, and is dedicated to Herr von Zmeskall. The opening movement, Allegro con brio, opens brusquely with a subject voiced in unison by the four instruments. An atmosphere of drama is thus established, to prevail throughout the entire movement. The turmoil is over, and in the second movement (Allegretto ma non troppo) there is a pervading calm, gently touched by sorrow. The characteristic energy of Beethoven's scherzo movements is found in the third movement (Allegro assai vivace, ma serio). After a poignant diminished-seventh chord comes the final movement (Larghetto), music of deep feeling, which yields to the closing Allegretto.

Recommended recording: CM-251 (Busch Quartet).

### *The Last Quartets*

It is not difficult to understand why the last quartets lay neglected for so long. They are the most difficult of Beethoven's quartets to understand and appreciate. Their thoughts are subtle and not easily assimilated; the idea is now master over form, and it becomes difficult at first hearing to understand the structural logic of the works. The harmonic, rhythmic, and contrapuntal language is audacious. The formal use of thematic material is once and for all abandoned. Instead, theme breaks in upon theme; fragments of melody are varied, transformed, then almost wilfully interrupted and recalled. Movements are broken up, then just as suddenly reconstituted, and finally built up in an organic whole. A new sense of form is here developed, and it requires intimacy for full understanding.

"Art demands of us that we shall not stand still," wrote Beethoven to his friend Holzer. "You will find in these quartets a new manner of voice treatment." And not that alone, but a new music as well—the music of the future—in which Beethoven wrestled with unorthodox forms, created unprecedented ways of expressing ideas and feelings never before expressed tonally.

The quintessence of Beethoven's art is to be found in these quartets; all that he had been striving for is to be found here. Far behind him lay the perfection and completeness of Mozart. The old standard of simple coherence was now abandoned, and in its place is found a more subtle type of unity in which (as in the C-sharp minor Quartet, Op. 131) the many diverse movements and ideas are woven into one fabric. There are things here to startle the imagination: strange and forbidding modulations, stark intervals, brusqueness, impatience, even harshness of accent. At other moments a tranquil polyphony is heard, contemplative and mystical. In these last quartets, Beethoven uttered the grief which had tormented his life, and which he had first attempted to communicate in the Heiligenstadt Testament. To hear, and presently to understand, the Cavatina of the B-flat major Quartet, Op. 130, is to perceive the depth of his unutterable loneliness.

But it is in their spiritual content, in their almost other-worldly concepts that these last quartets are extraordinary. Richard Wagner, for instance, attributed to them a transcendental calm which cannot be comprehended by any ordinary concept of beauty. Calm and serene they most assuredly are, of a serenity which, at times, suggests Nirvana. However, their calm is not the stillness of death, but rather of that timeless region conceived by Plato where absolute Truth, Beauty and Goodness exist, where the conflicts and frustrations of entombed humanity are not known. Beethoven's imagination, versatility and resource are nowhere more masterfully exhibited than in these quartets. And though they were misunderstood when first composed they are now generally ranked in the forefront of his works for originality, profundity and expression.

Three of the last quartets, the E-flat (Op. 127), the B-flat (Op. 130), and the A minor (Op. 132), were commissioned by Prince Galitzin in 1823 and were composed between 1824 and 1825. "I confess," wrote Galitzin, "that these eagerly awaited quartets were a source of deep disappointment in musical circles. They had been expecting music in the form and manner of Beethoven's first quartets; these were anything but that." It may have been Galitzin's disappointment in these quartets that made him renege on his original agreement with the composer and forget to send the full payment he had promised.

The E-flat Quartet, Op. 127, is in four movements. The first, *Maestoso*, opens with ponderous chords out of which a tender melody is evolved, the principal subject of the movement. The entire movement has a mystic quality. Profound feeling and a sense of frustration are felt in the slow movement (*Adagio ma non troppo e molto cantabile*). The Scherzo has characteristic Beethoven energy, while the Finale has a feminine charm rare in Beethoven's music.

The B-flat major, Op. 130, is in six movements, the best of which are the engaging and buoyant *Allegro assai alla tedesca*, and the moving Cavatina, one of the most poignant pages in all Beethoven. "Its youthful vitality," wrote Joseph de Marliave of this quartet, "instinct with the enthusiasm of

recovered strength, leaves little room for melodies of melancholy cast, but overflows in bursts of infectious gaiety and humor. If one accepts 'humor' in its broadest meaning, as the expression of imaginative freedom and the triumph of the mind over the sorrows and sordidness of the world, Op. 130 can be said to be the most humorous of them all."

The A-minor, Op. 132, was composed by Beethoven after a period of illness, and A. B. Marx finds in it a "musical expression of illness and recovery." (As a matter of fact, Beethoven himself appended to the beginning of the slow movement the following motto: "Song of Thanksgiving to the Deity on Recovery from an Illness, Written in Lydian Mode.") "The scene of the entire work," wrote Marx, "is laid in an atmosphere of suffering; the music is restless, morbid, and nervous, creating effects that the sinewy, wailing tone of the stringed instrument is particularly fitted to express." The first movement (*Assai sostenuto*; *Allegro*) is marked by a restlessness, a tension, a controlled nervousness as if born out of the fever of illness. In the second movement, *Allegro ma non troppo*, Marx finds the "feeling born of approaching convalescence inspired by the breath of renewed vitality . . . But we feel that his state is still precarious." The third movement, *Molto Adagio*, is suffused with deep religious feeling—it is Beethoven's thanksgiving to God for his recovery. The fourth movement, with its martial strains, breathes "an atmosphere of speedy, certain recovery; there is here revealed the return not yet of perfect strength, but of definite vigor and assurance"; a final coda is ebullient with revived energy.

The Op. 131, in C-sharp minor—undoubtedly the noblest of this set, and one of the most eloquent in the entire literature of chamber music—was composed in 1826 and dedicated to Baron von Stutterheim. It is of unusual length for a string quartet, having seven movements. The opening *Adagio ma non troppo* is a slow fugue—one of Beethoven's greatest, cast in so tragic a mould that Wagner called it "the most melancholy sentiment ever expressed in music." Then a buoyant *Allegro molto vivace* relieves the gloom, giving way to the third movement, a brief *Allegro moderato*. The fourth and central part of the work is an extended *Andante ma non troppo*, a theme and variations of memorable beauty, their changing moods indicated by frequent changes in tempo markings; the *Adagio* passage is truly, as Wagner said, "a vision of loveliness, the incarnation of perfect innocence." A spirited *Presto* follows as the fifth movement—joyful and pulsating with vigor. The sixth, *Adagio quasi un poco andante*, though a mere 28 bars in length, suggests mysterious meanings to the listener. But it is the *Finale* (*Allegro*) which, of all the movements, probably conveys the greatest number of varying messages to different hearers. For some, what J. W. N. Sullivan says about the *Hammerklavier Sonata* is a precise description of the temper of this final *Allegro*: heroic, indomitable, hopeless struggle. To others the music communicates a feeling of glad victory, untinged by despair. To Wagner it was "the fury of the world's dance of fierce pleasure, agony, ecstasy, of love, joy, anger, pas-

sion, and pain. . . . Amid the clamor [Beethoven] smiles, for to him it is nothing but a mocking fantasy; at the end the darkness beckons him away, and the task is done."

Opus 131 is no easy work to listen to; one's gradual progress toward grasping what Beethoven meant in it comes only through years of patient listening and study—with the printed score if possible. An eminent chamber-music player has confessed that he played it for thirty years before he felt that at last its inner meaning was reaching him. But here as perhaps nowhere else in Beethoven's works is patient and concentrated study so richly rewarded; for the Master's tested and ripened philosophy, suggested in all the last quartets, is here completely stated, so far as statements are possible in music.

The last of Beethoven's last quartets is the F major, Op. 135, composed in 1826. It is the most compact of the group, and except for the slow movement (*Lento assai cantabile e tranquillo*)—a page of profound and moving beauty—it is marked by gaiety and wit. The enigma of this quartet is found in the last movement, *Finale*. Over the brief Grave theme, Beethoven wrote the question: "*Muss es sein?*" And over the succeeding Allegro, he wrote the answer: "*Es muss sein!*" ("Must it be?"—"It must be!"). What Beethoven intended to convey with these words is not known definitely. Schindler, Beethoven's friend, gives a rather prosaic interpretation: When Beethoven's housekeeper asked him for some money, the composer asked her: "Must it be?" To which she replied affirmatively with firmness. Beethoven, says Schindler, was inspired by this dialogue to write the last movement of the quartet. Another, and more plausible, interpretation is that Beethoven—wary of the task of the writing of the quartet—asked himself if it was necessary to complete it at all. The answer was—yes. With a schoolboy's love of pranks, Beethoven decided to incorporate his own struggle with his artistic conscience into the movement of the quartet.

The *Grosse Fuge*, composed in 1825, was originally intended to be the last movement of the B-flat major, Op. 130. His publisher considered it too forbidding and difficult and urged Beethoven to publish it separately and to write a new final movement for the quartet. This Beethoven eventually did. Thus the last piece of music Beethoven was destined to write was not the Op. 135 Quartet but the last movement of the Op. 130.

Recommended recordings: Op. 127, VM-489 (Busch Quartet); Op. 130, CM-474 (Busch Quartet); Op. 131, CM-429 (Budapest Quartet); Op. 132, CM-545 (Budapest Quartet); Op. 135, CM-489 (Budapest Quartet); *Grosse Fuge*, V-8586-7 (Budapest Quartet).

## SONATAS

### Piano Sonatas

During Beethoven's lifetime, the piano—invented some fifty years before his birth—came into general use. This was a fortunate development, for the ungovernable strength of Beethoven's musical style was hardly adaptable to the



sensitive-toned harpsichord, his temperament uncongenial to the articulation of delicate fancies. The writing of sweet and charming harpsichord pieces was not for him—he preferred massive sounds, rich sonorities, a wide range of dynamics and colors; and for these the piano was naturally suited.

“Even when Mozart took to playing and writing for the pianoforte,” wrote Parry, “he continued to treat it in a harpsichord style, which was subdued and quiet; and he very much disliked the energetic and muscular kind of playing which was necessary to get the proper and characteristic effect out of the pianoforte. . . . By Beethoven’s time the requirements of the instrument were becoming much better understood. . . . The result was a much grander scale of writing in sonatas, just as there was in orchestral symphonies, and Beethoven was the composer to whose share the work of bringing this branch of music to perfection also fell. . . . He soon developed an extraordinary insight into the nature of the instrument and produced new and deep and noble effects with it. He found out how to express his own individuality completely in this branch of composition earlier than in any other; and he gave such color and character to what he wrote for it that the whole standard of pianoforte music has been raised thereby to a higher level.”

In considering Beethoven’s sonatas for piano, it must be remembered that whereas even Haydn and Mozart wrote their sonatas with one eye on pedagogical usefulness, Beethoven considered the piano sonata exclusively as a fully realized medium for artistic expression. Thus he did not hesitate to experiment with the fullest resources of the piano keyboard, tapping a richness of color and a technical range heretofore unknown to it, and pouring into the piano sonata some of his noblest thoughts and to reveal through it some of his most daring attitudes.

Beethoven composed thirty-two sonatas for the piano. The first three (grouped as Opus 2) reveal a certain kinship to those of Haydn and Philipp Emanuel Bach. But Beethoven was not the man to stay bound by the chains of tradition, without attempting to free himself. The A major Sonata (Op. 2, No. 2) has a richer harmonic language than the piano sonatas of the time, while the C major (Op. 2, No. 3) contains the first scherzo to appear in a piano sonata. With each succeeding sonata, the form expands, the ideas acquire a richer poetic meaning, and the wild Beethoven temperament grows more assertive. By his seventh sonata, the D major (Op. 10, No. 3), we have—at least in one movement—a glimpse of the later Beethoven: the “Largo e messo” movement voices a heroic sorrow, a tight-lipped and restrained grief which only Beethoven seemed capable of uttering with such a nobility and grandeur of spirit.

### *Sonata in C minor, “Pathétique”*

It is in the *Pathétique Sonata*, Op. 13, that Beethoven first arrived at a successful integration of sonata form and piano style. Virtuosity is now being subjugated to the poetic idea. Beethoven composed it in 1799 (one year

before the First Symphony). To fully appreciate the temper of the sonata it is necessary to recall that it was at about this time that Beethoven first became conscious that his hearing was failing him. How strongly he was affected by this discovery can best be guessed by reading his letters of 1800 and his Heiligenstadt Testament of 1802. But long before Beethoven had articulated his despair in prose, he had spoken of it in his music. The powerful introductory Grave—the chords sounding an unfathomable grief—is succeeded by the energetic and defiant first subject which appears as a defiant challenge. “I shall seize Fate by the throat,” Beethoven later wrote; “it shall certainly never overcome me!” The Adagio cantabile is a page of serenity and repose. Was not Beethoven soon to exclaim that “Plutarch taught me resignation”? From serenity, Beethoven passes in the third movement (Allegro) to an almost light-hearted gaiety: “Oh, life is so beautiful, would I could have a thousand lives!”

### *Sonata in C-sharp minor, “Moonlight”*

Numerous “romantic” legends have grown up around the circumstances under which Beethoven’s Sonata Op. 27, No. 2, was composed—the so-called *Moonlight*. As to all of these, it is to be emphasized that they are the sheerest nonsense, with no basis in ascertainable fact, and that none of them contributes anything whatever to our understanding and appreciation of the C-sharp minor’s eloquent music. Many such stories allege that it was the product of spur-of-the-moment improvisation—though one of the surest facts we know about Beethoven is that he did not “improvise” his sonatas; completely and beautifully developed, each one was born out of excruciating travail.

In any case, the term “moonlight” is a far from apt epithet for the sonata as a whole. As Anton Rubinstein protested: “Moonlight awakens a lyric feeling, while this music tells of a sky heavy with leaden colors. In the Finale, the storm breaks.” Nor did Beethoven himself give it this name. He called it *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, partly because it violates the traditional sonata form by omitting the usual “sonata-allegro” first movement, and partly because of the free character of the material.

In point of time, it was probably the German critic Rellstab who started the tradition of attaching “descriptions” to the C-sharp minor Sonata, when he said that to him it suggested moonlight on the waves—presumably with special reference to the serenity of the opening Adagio, since the other two movements suggest nothing of the sort. Perhaps the favorite “story” springs from the fact that Beethoven dedicated the sonata to the Countess Giulietta Guicciardi. The known fact is that he fell deeply in love with Giulietta and considered marrying her—an idea that was frustrated by her father. On this basis has been built the legend that Beethoven then composed the Sonata to express his hopeless passion. But the truth is somewhat more prosaic: shortly before this time, he had composed and dedicated to Giulietta a Rondo which

now—for practical reasons—he wished to rededicate to Princess Lichnowsky; he therefore soothed the Countess's feelings by dedicating to her, instead, this new sonata in C-sharp minor.

### *Sonata in D minor, "Tempest"*

When Beethoven was asked for the meaning of his D-minor Sonata, Op. 31, No. 2, he answered: "Read Shakespeare's *Tempest*." Discussing this point, Sir Donald F. Tovey wrote: "With all its tragic power of its first movement, the D minor Sonata is, like Prospero, almost as far beyond tragedy as it is beyond mere foul weather. It will do you no harm to think of Miranda in the slow movement; but people who want to identify Ariel and Caliban and the castaways, good and villainous, may as well confine their attention to the exploits of the Scarlet Pimpernel when the *Eroica* or C minor Symphony is played."

The sonata opens with an introductory Largo, only a bar and three-quarters in length, after which the Allegro bursts forth full of agitation and restlessness, rising, in its first principal subject, to a mood of intense drama. The Adagio movement is in abridged sonata form; there is an exposition of the principal themes, and a recapitulation, but in place of the usual development there are merely ornamentations of the melodies. The movement is placid and contemplative. The closing Allegretto opens with a rippling figure that flows uninterruptedly to the end of the work.

### *Sonata in C major, "Waldstein"*

In the *Waldstein* Sonata, Op. 53—so called because it was dedicated to Beethoven's patron, Count Waldstein—the piano sonata begins to acquire new dimensions. In point of form, what had formerly been a basilica now becomes a cathedral. The *Waldstein* is the first of Beethoven's piano sonatas cast in that extended design which was to mark his greatest sonatas. We find here, too, the more recognizable Beethoven—the Beethoven of fiery tempers and dramatic accent. The very opening of the sonata at once plunges into a tempestuous mood, its fever heightened rather than relieved by a brief contrasting second subject suggesting a restless spirit come to rest. The mystic Beethoven is heard in the Adagio molto, a short introductory section that plumbs profound depths of feeling; and the exuberant and high-spirited Beethoven is heard in the Rondo.

Originally, Beethoven wrote a long slow movement for this sonata, but he rejected it as being inappropriate; this is now issued as an independent work called the *Andante Favorsi*.

Composed in 1804, two years after the Heiligenstadt Testament, the sonata betrays none of the depressions and mental sufferings to which the composer was subject during those tempestuous years. It is interesting to recall that the patron to whom the work is dedicated, Count Waldstein, was a Bohemian nobleman living much of the time in Vienna but having as his home the great

estate of Dux in Bohemia on which, in 1825, was to be born the composer Smetana, son of an estate employee.

*Sonata in F minor, "Appassionata"*

This is one of the noblest of Beethoven's piano sonatas. It was composed in 1804 (Op. 57) and shows him at the height of his creative powers. Ernst von Elterlein has provided an admirable analysis of this masterpiece: "The title *Appassionata* . . . is the most suitable and comprehensive that could have been chosen. In the first and third movements the work is a night piece, a picture of a violent emotional conflict, illumined, however, by bright interludes; the middle movement is an ideal flight into happier regions. The first movement begins with one of those short characteristic themes. . . . Dismal spectral shadows rise, as it were, out of the lowest depths; soft wailings issue from the heart, and fate is heard knocking at the door. Suddenly a mighty storm bursts forth. . . . In the second theme there arises a wonderful strain of happy consolation. But the storm of painful emotion begins again; . . . no more interludes of light . . . the nocturnal shadows assuming a firmer shape; and the agitation increasing until another climax is attained. . . .

"The second movement, *Andante con moto* . . . forms a contrast between the first and the final movements. . . . From the quiet depths there arises a holy song of blessed peace. . . . The third movement, *Allegro ma non troppo*, begins with a succession of sixths—a wild outcry from a soul in anguish; then there is a rushing movement in the bass, like a wild mountain torrent tearing and foaming down. The roar and ferment continue until a clear, firm form struggles out of the whirl, rushes in wild passion, accompanied by wailing thirds. . . . The roar of the storm is renewed at the entrance of the second part, sparks of passion flash forth, and then a short tributary motive reveals poignant anguish. . . . The struggle becomes a little quieter. . . . But only for an instant. . . . At last, in the *Presto*, the tone-poet comes forth like a warrior in armor, and with proud, virile dignity seems to say, in full chords, 'Behold! the storm has not broken the oak; it approaches again, but it will not break it now!' A final storm follows, but it is powerless: the spirit has freed itself, and at last the struggles ceases in solemn minor strains."

*Sonata in E-flat, "Les Adieux"*

In 1805, the Archduke Rudolph became one of Beethoven's pupils. Between teacher and pupil there developed a bond of friendship. The Archduke was a sensitive musician who knew the true measure of Beethoven's greatness. For the sake of that genius, Rudolph was tolerant to Beethoven's irascibility, tactlessness, rudeness. In 1809, the Archduke was responsible for raising for Beethoven an annual income of 4,000 gulden. Beethoven—though he treated his Imperial student handily—admired the young man, and dedicated many of his important works to him.

When, in 1809, during the siege of Vienna by the French, the Archduke was forced to leave the city, Beethoven was so deeply moved by the separation that he decided to write a piano sonata about it (Op. 81a). The first movement he called *Das Lebewohl* (The Farewell)—opening it with a slow descending figure of three chords over which he wrote the syllables “Le—be—wohl!” In the second movement, entitled *Die Abwesenheit* (The Absence) Beethoven reflects briefly on the pain of separation. Actually, this movement is only a transition to the joyous finale, entitled *Das Wiedersehen* (The Return) commemorating Rudolph’s return to the Austrian capital in October of 1809. If there is any doubt of Beethoven’s true feelings for Rudolph, it is dispelled by this closing movement, which is so ebullient in spirit, such a rousing expression of good humor (touched, in the coda, by some pensive thoughts—possibly Beethoven’s reflections on friendship in general) that there can be no question of his genuine joy in seeing his pupil again.

### *Sonata in A major*

Paul Bekker finds a spiritual kinship between this sonata (Op. 101) and the *Moonlight*—both being free fantasia writing within the framework of the sonata form. Elaborating on this kinship between the two sonatas, Eric Blom wrote: “It is true that here, as there, the slow movement is merely an introduction to the finale, and that the latter is the most extended and highly developed movement. But spiritually, Op. 27, No. 2, and Op. 101 are as far apart as they are in years. In the latter work all is expression, nothing merely display and technical contrivance.”

The sonata is dedicated to Baroness Dorothea von Ertmann, a dear friend and patron of Beethoven, and a truly remarkable amateur pianist. When Dorothea’s only child died, Beethoven saved her from losing her mind by playing his music to her for hours on end, offering the consolation she needed in her grief. Did he play for her the Op. 101 Sonata? Certainly its alternation between peaceful serenity and good-humored joy would provide a palliative for the troubled spirit. The first movement (*Etwas lebhaft und mit der innigsten Empfindung*) has a gentle and lovable principal theme which lends suavity to the movement. The second (*Lebhaft marschmässig*) is nervous and restless, with ironic overtones. A brief slow section, deeply emotional (*Langsam und sehnsuchtsvoll*), leads into a fiery Finale (*Geschwind doch nicht zu sehr, und mit Entschlossenheit*) which is full of joyous feeling.

### *Sonata in B-flat major, “Hammerklavier”*

In all his closing sonatas for the piano (beginning with Op. 101), Beethoven’s writing for the keyboard acquires symphonic character. He has now learned the full capacities of the piano in matters of color, shades of expression, dynamics—and he exploits them fully. As in most of the works of his last period, Beethoven’s speech here achieves rare intensity, as new avenues

of musical expression are fearlessly explored, and the same time reveals an undercurrent of mysticism.

Of Beethoven's piano sonatas, the *Hammerklavier*, Op. 106, is the greatest, Herculean in its strength, Gargantuan in its stature. It has a profundity which we find elsewhere only in the last quartets; an emotional depth which, it seems, only Beethoven was able to penetrate. Being the not always disciplined speech of a great and untrammelled soul, it sets forth a complicated musical thought which, in its many deviations, only a keen intelligence can follow without losing sight of the essential unity. Its effectiveness does not lie on the surface; one must penetrate to the inmost texture of the music to experience its moving eloquence. It has many moments to stir the sensitive listener profoundly: the iron-fisted defiance of the opening chords, the noble pages of resignation of the slow movement, the almost harrowing tragic content of the last movement with its gruesome series of trills—these are the quintessence of poetic expression in music.

At no time in his life was Beethoven more miserable than in 1818, when he composed the *Hammerklavier* Sonata. He was sick, he was deaf, he was unutterably alone. He knew that continued frustration was to be his lot instead of the love and companionship for which he had been searching a lifetime. He was conscious of his isolation and his suffering is fully expressed in this Sonata. Surely in few of his works do we have such an accounting of personal grief as in this music, or such a heart-rending insight into a soul in torment.

The second movement, Scherzo, B-flat major, is of an unstable, ever-moving nature. It hurries, it seeks, it flies, it pushes. It displays, first, an unsatiated and insatiable longing, and then, in the trio and the following presto, a strange, forthright humor.

In the third movement we hear more fully developed the heart-rending cry which was first introduced in the first movement. Then it was deep, mournful, bold and surging. Now it has become a soul shattering prayer for light and joy out of utter darkness and sorrow. It speaks with the power of a great religious discovery and like such a conception it contains within itself the deep unfathomable strains of hope and rest. But, unlike much shallow religious solace, there is no idea here that grief has been put to rout, destroyed. It subsides, but exists, a component of glorious tranquillity. This remarkable picture of grief and joy, unrest and tranquillity, is filled out in immortal fashion by the fugue in the fourth movement where, as Marx says, a deeply disturbed intelligence, ceaselessly moving, is tinged, altered, mollified by certain elegiac tones. The picture of Olympian restiveness which is here presented is so dark and foreboding that one shrinks from it with much the same feeling our forebears must have had before the powers of darkness and the Devil. Yet still a few welcome notes of light and humor are able to penetrate.

In both form and meaning the *Hammerklavier* Sonata goes far beyond anything that Beethoven had ever achieved in writing for the piano. Although it

is sometimes difficult to follow him in this profound utterance, the unifying bond appears to be the vision and idealism which infused the conception; a conception executed with boldness and originality.

### *Sonata in C minor, Op. 111*

Beethoven's last piano sonata was composed in 1822 and dedicated to Archduke Rudolph. "The last sonata," wrote Eric Blom, "sums up the whole experience gathered by Beethoven throughout all the sonata writing that had occupied him on and off for twenty-six years." Amplifying upon this, Blom points out that in his piano sonatas Beethoven repeatedly showed a leaning toward fugal writing and toward theme-and-variations. Both of these forms are found in this sonata. The first movement (Maestoso; Allegro con brio ed appassionato), though in sonata form, is a "free fugal fabric." The second, and closing, movement (Arietta) is a set of variations on a theme of other-worldly beauty.

Beethoven lived on for five years after the writing of this sonata, yet he wrote no others. He himself explained that he now found the piano "an unsatisfactory instrument." (Actually, he was to write still another major piano work, the *Diabelli Variations*.) When we hear the last Beethoven sonatas, particularly the *Hammerklavier* and the Op. 111, we begin to understand his reluctance to write again in the sonata form. Not that the piano was unsatisfactory, but that he had so completely exhausted the possibilities of the sonata form, and so thoroughly explored every tone possibility of the piano, that to go further was impossible. He had nothing more to say in the piano sonata form, and having nothing more to say he preferred to remain silent.

Recommended recordings: All the piano sonatas have been recorded by Artur Schnabel for the Beethoven Sonata Society.

### Sonatas for Violin and Piano

With a gesture towards the historical past (a gesture rather rare with him) Beethoven referred to some of his sonatas for violin and piano as "sonatas for pianoforte with the accompaniment of the violin." Actually no one during his own time, or before him, was more responsible for bringing individuality and emancipation to the violin than was Beethoven in these sonatas. His conception of the sonata for violin and piano was of a single artistic unit: the string instrument and the piano were collaborators in an artistic adventure—each contributing to the work its own gamut of colors and dynamics and sonorities. With Beethoven, even more than with Mozart, there is a wonderful interplay between string instrument and piano, forming an inextricable partnership. And in the finest of these sonatas there is a wealth of poetic meaning which gives them an interest apart from their charm as music.

Beethoven composed ten sonatas for violin and piano, the most frequently heard being the following:

*Spring* Sonata in F major, Op. 24, is a work requiring little comment; its three movements are suffused with the spirit of vernal freshness which we associate with springtime. It has a strikingly original Finale, in rondo form.

Sonata in G major, Op. 30, No. 3 and Sonata in G major, Op. 96 are both eloquent nature pictures—"pastoral symphonies" for violin and piano. As one writer remarked, the Op. 30, No. 3 "is full of rustic impressions, and the bucolic spirit of the country dance," while in the Op. 96 we feel "the caress of the soft breeze and the gentle charm of the countryside."

A great deal of romantic nonsense has been written about the dramatic and tempestuous *Kreutzer* Sonata in A major, Op. 47, largely because of its association with the Tolstoy novel that borrowed its title. Indeed, Anton Rubinstein accused Tolstoy point-blank of having misunderstood completely the virile character of Beethoven's sonata in making it serve as inspiration (and title) for a romantic novel about a jealous husband who murders his wife. The sonata takes its name from its dedication to the famous violinist Rodolph Kreutzer, who (it is now amusing to recall) refused to perform it because it was too "outrageously unintelligible."

Recommended recordings: All the violin and piano sonatas have been recorded for the Beethoven Violin Sonata Society by Fritz Kreisler and Franz Rupp.

### Sonatas for Violoncello and Piano

Between 1796 and 1815 Beethoven composed five sonatas for 'cello and piano. Contrasting these with the sonatas for violin, Paul Bekker wrote: "The violoncello is better adapted as a solo instrument for chamber music duet than the violin; its noble tenor tone and virile, earnest, yet adaptable and sympathetic character surpass for this purpose the coquetry and bravura of the violin and substitute simple cantabile for firework effects. This explains the deeper inner significance of Sonatas Op. 5 composed in 1796 as compared with the violin sonata Op. 12 composed later. The emotional earnestness and structural grandeur of the opening movements of these two 'cello pieces are surprising."

The most famous of the 'cello sonatas are the following:

Sonata in A major, Op. 69, a work of dignified and often majestic character, frequently charged with strong feelings, even passion. It has a brief, but supremely beautiful, Adagio.

Sonata in C major, Op. 102, No. 1, in free sonata form, beginning with quiet contemplation, approaching a revery, and progressing through the slow movement to closing pages of bright sparkle and vivacity.

Sonata in D major, Op. 102, No. 2, which opens with music of uncontrolled energy, passing to pages of exquisite tenderness and melancholy, and concluding with a proud affirmation of the ego.

Recommended recordings: Sonata in A major, CM-312 (Feuermann—Hess); Sonata in C major, VM-14366-7 (Casals—Horszowski); Sonata in D major, CX-258 (Piatigorsky—Berkowitz).



## SONGS

*Adelaide**An die Ferne Geliebte*

Beethoven never wrote well for voices. Whether in his opera, *Fidelio*, or in his *Missa Solemnis*, or in the closing movement of the Ninth Symphony, he disregarded the limitations of the human voice and considered it just another instrument. His writing in this field is frequently cumbersome, frequently unvocal, frequently unconcerned with the meters and the vowels and the consonants of his poetic text. Yet Beethoven's songs—of which the most famous are *Adelaide*, Op. 46, and the song-cycle *An die Ferne Geliebte*, Op. 98—are historically important. They are the direct predecessors of the Schubert *Lied*. As a matter of fact, there is in *Adelaide* so Schubertian a warmth and romanticism as to give the lie to the long-accepted generalization that the *Lied* was born with Schubert. *Adelaide*, composed in or about 1795 and first published in 1797, was responsible for Beethoven's first substantial success as a composer in Vienna. *An die Ferne Geliebte*—which he composed in 1816 in an effort to give the song form a greater and broader expanse—is the first song cycle in musical history. It is composed of six songs: 1—"Auf dem Hügel sitz' ich"; 2—"Wo die Berge so blau"; 3—"Leichte Segler in den Höhen"; 4—"Diese Wolken in den Höhen"; 5—"Es kehret der Maien"; 6—"Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder." It is ardent music, personally felt, with a sustained beauty of lyric writing rare in song literature before Schubert's time.

Recommended recording: *Adelaide*, V-2195 (Björling); *An die Ferne Geliebte*, V-12246-7 (Hüsch).

## SYMPHONIES

It is remarkably symbolic that, in the last movement of his last symphony, Beethoven yielded to the human voice; it is almost as if, in his preceding eight symphonies, orchestral music had been developed to such an advanced point of poetic expression that it could go no farther, and that it now needed the collaboration of the vocal art. The Nine Symphonies of Beethoven stand majestically as a unique and indestructible monument in orchestral music; everything in similar form that preceded them loses in stature by comparison. Mozart brought to the symphony an exquisite feeling for form and an unparalleled sense of tonal beauty. But Beethoven went further—not only in enlarging the symphonic structure, but in enhancing the power of music to project profound feeling.

The Nine Symphonies are notable for the variety of poetic concepts found in them. The heroic epic of the Third stands between the lyric Second and the elegiac and gentle Fourth; the dramatic Fifth is partner to the pastoral Sixth; the powerful and cogent Seventh is followed by the joyful and sprightly

Eighth, and these are succeeded by the Ninth, that paean to the brotherhood of man.

It has been suggested that the greater Beethoven is found in the odd-numbered symphonies. It would be more truthful to say that in the even-numbered series it is a different Beethoven that we find, rather than a lesser one. The psychologist could doubtless explain why Beethoven, after tussling with a work of monumental proportions, should feel like writing his next symphonic effort in smaller dimensions; it is almost as if the reservoir of his spirit, drained by the demands of a major assignment, can be replenished only by a lighter task. Certainly it is not by accident that a Beethoven symphony of epic stature is in every case followed by one that is lyric and slighter. Yet it would be a mistake to underestimate the artistic value of the smaller works; the Fourth, the *Pastoral*, and the Eighth are magnificent in their own right, and reflective of other facets of Beethoven's many-sided temperament.

### *Symphony No. 1*

### *Symphony No. 2*

"Today, Wednesday, April 2nd, 1800," ran an official announcement in Vienna, "Herr Ludwig van Beethoven will have the honor of giving a grand concert for his own benefit in the Royal Imperial Theater beside the Burg. . . . The pieces which will be performed are . . . a grand concerto for pianoforte, played and composed by Herr Ludwig van Beethoven . . . and a new grand symphony with complete orchestra by Ludwig van Beethoven."

The First Symphony in C major, Op. 21, is sometimes loosely labeled "Mozartian." Admittedly, its symphonic structure is more or less that of Mozart, and the subject of the second movement is reminiscent of the slow movement of Mozart's G minor symphony. But to use the term "Mozartian" for the work as a whole is to judge it superficially. For here the giant Beethoven already begins to stir restlessly; the very opening chord of the first movement (a dominant seventh instead of the customary tonic triad) reveals him as the iconoclast.

The way in which the Viennese of 1800 greeted the work is sufficient proof that they did not think they were hearing a "Mozartian" symphony—that it struck them as something radically different and new. Indeed, the musicians of the orchestra regarded the music as too difficult, and they refused to take it seriously. The audience was equally puzzled. With the critics, they felt that there was "too much use of wind instruments, so much so that the music sounded as if written for a military band rather than an orchestra." (How could they be expected to know that Beethoven was now beginning his explorations into orchestral sonorities?) The minuet seemed to them heavy-footed. (How could they guess that this was an anticipation of the Beethoven Scherzo?) Berlioz was later to consider this minuet movement the most original of the four.

These criticisms sound odd to our ears, enchanted as they are by the

eighteenth-century grace and charm of the music. Certainly, compared with a symphony like the *Eroica*, the First speaks from the Old World rather than from the New. The structure is the essence of simplicity; Beethoven's complex and dramatic developments are still in the future.

Composed in 1802, the Second Symphony was first performed at the Theater-an-der-Wien on April 5, 1803. The Viennese were no more receptive to this work than they had been to its predecessor; they thought it labored, self-conscious, heavy-handed. Yet, as with the First Symphony, what attracts us today in the Second is its simplicity and its sunshiny radiance. The *Larghetto* movement is one of the most singable lyric pages to be found in early Beethoven, a song of semi-religious character, gentle and serene. In the third movement, Beethoven definitely discards the Minuet and replaces it with the Scherzo—a gay and vivacious movement foreshadowing the released energies of the later Beethoven scherzos.

Recommended recordings: Symphony No. 1, VM-507 (B.B.C. Symphony—Toscanini); Symphony No. 2, VM-625 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

### *Symphony No. 3, "Eroica"*

It is doubtful if the history of art provides another such step towards artistic fulfillment as Beethoven took between the Second and the E-flat major Symphony, Op. 55, better known as the *Eroica*. The *Eroica* is not only a work of rare nobility and grandeur—it is an epoch marking milestone at which the symphony form at last enters into a brave new world. For the first time, Beethoven showed what heights he could reach when his imagination was fired by an appropriate poetic idea. This was, of course, a humanitarian idea—Beethoven's republican creed, his insistence on freedom and equality. By now it is well known that the Third was originally intended by Beethoven to be called the "Buonaparte Symphony" because when he began it he saw in the First Consul the liberator of all the down-trodden, a true son of the French Revolution. It is also equally well known that when Beethoven learned that Napoleon Bonaparte was no idealist but rather was compounded of the human frailties of ambition and personal aggrandizement—that, concretely, he had declared himself Emperor of the French—Beethoven bitterly tore off his dedication page and exclaimed: "Then he is nothing but an ordinary man. Now he'll trample on all the rights of men to serve his ambition; he will put himself higher than all others and turn tyrant." And he renamed his Symphony the *Eroica*.

When Beethoven was inspired by a great poetic idea he always brought to that idea a form of commensurate proportions. Thus, with the *Eroica*, the symphony suddenly abandons its comparative formalism and restrictions, bursts loose from its previous bonds, and acquires heroic stature. No symphony before this had been planned on so vast an architectural design, just as no symphony before had been so fraught with dramatic and emotional intensity. Here, certainly, music had become much more than pleasurable

sonorities; it had become human experience, idealism, tragedy of Greek proportions.

The *Eroica* was composed in 1803-4 and was first performed (under the direction of the composer) at the palace of Prince Lobkowitz in Vienna in December 1804. The first public performance took place at the Theater-ander-Wien on April 7, 1805. One can well appreciate the bewilderment of its first audiences in hearing a symphony like this one. It was called overlong, or dull, or grotesque, or obscure. One man shouted from the gallery, "I'd give another *kreutzer* if they would stop!"

The shattering strength of the opening two chords of the first movement, which at once yield to the first subject; the elemental power of the series of consecutive dissonant chords which introduce the second theme; the monumental developments of the principal subjects, growing as complicated as a labyrinth; the rich summation of the coda—what could such passages have meant to ears accustomed to the refinements and exact proportions of the classic symphony? Yet one would have looked for adequate appreciation of the profundity and eloquence of the Funeral March, one of the great threnodies in music; one would have expected some response to such high and proud sorrow, to the infinite shades of pathos that appear as the movement progresses—the trio like a summation of the hero's achievements, and the ending of the movement yielding to a tragedy that causes the orchestra's voice to break. The poetic concept of sorrow had never before, and has rarely since, found such musical characterization. The Scherzo movement arrives as a welcome relief; and the grandeur of the entire symphony is maintained in the closing movement, a set of variations on a theme that Beethoven must have loved, for he had used it in his *Prometheus* and in one of his country dances.

In 1817, Beethoven was asked by the poet Kuffner which of his symphonies he liked the best of all. "The *Eroica*, of course," answered Beethoven. "Not the Fifth?" asked Kuffner in surprise. "No," Beethoven insisted, "the *Eroica*."

Recommended recording: VM-765 (NBC Symphony—Toscanini).

### *Symphony No. 4*

Count Franz von Oppersdorf, who had heard Beethoven's Second Symphony and was impressed by it, gave the composer a fee of 350 florins to compose a new symphony for him. Beethoven, who at the time was working on the Fifth Symphony, had been intending that work for Oppersdorf, but he confessed to his patron: "I was compelled by want to sell . . . to someone else the symphony I had meant for you. But be assured that you will soon receive the one I design you to have." The Fourth, in B-flat major, Op. 60, was composed in the autumn of 1806, and was first performed (with moderate success) in Vienna in March 1807.

Schumann speaks of the Fourth Symphony, as a "slender Greek maiden between two Norse giants." Slender she is, and graceful as well—particularly

in the lyric second movement, one of the most eloquent abstractions of beauty found in nineteenth-century music. ("Such must be the song of the Archangel Michael as he contemplates the world's uprising to the threshold of the empyrean," wrote Berlioz of this music. "The being who wrote such a marvel of inspiration as this movement was not a man.") But the symphony has vigor as well. The introductory Adagio with which it opens is one of Beethoven's dramatic pages—maintaining an atmosphere of suspense until the Allegro vivace bursts forth with unrepressed gaiety to relieve the tension. The third movement—called a Minuet but actually a Scherzo—is in the recognizable Beethoven vein of brusqueness; while the last movement is an outpouring of joyous laughter.

Recommended recording: VM-676 (B.B.C. Symphony—Toscanini).

### *Symphony No. 5*

Beethoven himself described the opening theme of the first movement of the C minor Symphony, Op. 67, saying: "Thus Fate knocks at the door." With this as a clue, we are justified in reading into the symphony a musical depiction of Beethoven's struggle with the fate of deafness. But we need no program whatever to understand the music of a movement like this one which remains to this day one of the most remarkable examples of economy in the utilization of musical material. The opening subject is only two bars in length, four notes to each bar; yet out of this brief subject (and a counter-subject lyric in character) Beethoven builds music of breath-taking proportions, inevitable in its logic, overpowering in its force and strength.

It is interesting to point out that this opening theme was adopted, during the Second World War, as a Victory symbol by the subjugated European countries. The reason for this—as everybody knows by this time—is that the letter V (for Victory) is represented in the Morse code by three dots and a dash, a combination that roughly corresponds to the Beethoven phrase; though it must be borne in mind that the correspondence is not exact, since the Morse dash has the time-length of two dots only, while the fourth note in the Beethoven phrase is marked for a longer hold than this. We may be sure that the Master would have been proud to know of this borrowing—to know that his music has become the symbol of hope and courage among indomitable people victimized by Nazi and Fascist tyranny. That the man who composed the *Eroica* and the prisoners' paean to freedom in *Fidelio* should be appointed spokesman for freedom in the twentieth century is eloquently appropriate.

The second movement of the Fifth is a set of variations on a beautiful and extended melodic subject: the Titanic struggle of the first movement has ended, to be succeeded by the peace that comes with resignation. The third movement, introduced by a brooding theme in the basses and 'cellos, is a Scherzo whose principal theme retains the rhythm of the "Fate" subject of the first movement. In the trio of this Scherzo, Beethoven's writing for the double bass—it endows that clumsy fellow with a dexterity he never knew

before—contributes a gentle note of mockery to the movement. The closing movement is a magnificent affirmation of the spirit—conceivably the announcement of the triumph that rewards the acceptance of one's inevitable fate—promulgated majestically by three trombones.

Recommended recording: VM-640 (NBC Symphony—Toscanini).

### *Symphony No. 6 "Pastoral"*

No other composer had a deeper love for Nature than Beethoven. He would take long walks in the beautiful outskirts of Vienna, in Döbling, Heiligenstadt, and Grinzing, and there—in his lonely strolls—feel at one with the universe. As Vincent d'Indy wrote: "Nature was to Beethoven not only a consoler for his sorrows and disenchantments; she was also a friend with whom he took pleasure in familiar talk, the only intercourse to which his deafness interposed no obstacle."

In the Sixth Symphony in F major, Op. 68, Beethoven communicates his sensitive responses to the wonder of Nature. It is the only one of his symphonies to which he appended a program—here in the form of descriptive titles. The first movement, "Awakening of joyful feelings upon arrival in the country," recreates the exhilaration he experienced each time he went out into the Vienna woods. Built upon a simple opening subject (appropriated from a Croatian folk song), the entire movement becomes an intoxicating expression of Nature-love which carries with it the verdant freshness of the open country. In the second movement, "The Brook," we have an eloquent musical translation of the gentle flowing of the waters to the accompaniment of singing nightingales and cuckoos. Schindler has pointed out the spot at Heiligenstadt which inspired this music, "a limpid stream descending from a neighboring height and shaded by leafy elms on both sides." The third movement is a "Village Festival," in which Beethoven (who could compose a rowdy *Deutsche Tanz* or a *Contredanse* with the best of them) writes a peasant dance. The dance is interrupted by the outbreak of the Storm (fourth movement)—a description of rare fidelity beginning with the first nervous suggestions of a coming storm, its emergence in full fury, and its weary dissipation. In the last movement, "The Shepherds' Song," the countryside is reborn, made young and fragrant by the rain.

The Pastoral Symphony was composed in the Heiligenstadt countryside in the summer of 1808, and was first performed at the Theater-an-der-Wien on December 22, 1808.

Recommended recording: VM-417 (NBC Symphony—Toscanini).

### *Symphony No. 7*

### *Symphony No. 8*

The Seventh Symphony, in A major, Op. 92, was composed in 1811–12 and was first performed on December 8, 1813. Many programs have been attached

to it, though there can be no doubt that Beethoven had none of them in mind—nor any other. He was here writing “absolute” music, rhapsodic in character, its interest exclusively musical. An introduction in the first movement progresses to a vigorous Vivace. In the second movement, Allegretto, Beethoven presents two principal themes, later using them contrapuntally. The third movement, Presto, is, as one writer described it, one of the most felicitous expressions of Beethoven’s capacity for ungovernable joy. The finale is a corybantic dance, wild and abandoned, which was probably what led Wagner to designate this symphony as “the apotheosis of the dance.”

And once again—in the next symphony—we have a sharp contrast in Beethoven’s symphonic writing. The rhapsody of the Seventh is followed by the wit and playful good humor of the Eighth, in F major, Op. 93. The Eighth was composed in 1812 and was first performed in Vienna on February 27, 1814. Its opening generates at once that mood of good spirits which again reminds us that Beethoven had his merry moments. The second movement, Allegretto scherzando, is gay mockery at Maelzel, the inventor of the metronome: a light and catchy melody is set against a background of clicking metronomic beats. There is no slow movement; Beethoven may have preferred not to inject any contrast to the pervading lightness. The third movement is an infectious Minuet, and the fourth an ebullient Allegro Vivace.

Recommended recordings: Symphony No. 7, VM-317 (New York Philharmonic Symphony—Toscanini); Symphony No. 8, VM-336 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

### *Symphony No. 9, “Choral”*

As early as 1793, Beethoven had aspired to set to music Schiller’s *Ode to Joy*—an expression of his own dream of the brotherhood of man. When the idea occurred to him to incorporate it within the framework of a symphony, he sketched it first as a slow movement, then as a scherzo. Not until 1817, however, did he arrive at the appropriate design for the symphony, and the place that the ode should have in it. And not until 1823 did he begin intensive work upon it. The Symphony in D minor, op. 125, was completed in the winter of 1823, and was fully scored by the spring of 1824. It was first performed at the Kärntnertheater on May 7, 1824. Beethoven, who was so deaf that he could not hear a note of music, insisted upon conducting the performance; the musicians agreed among themselves to disregard him and to keep their eyes fixed on Schuppanzigh, the concertmaster and choral director. “Beethoven stood as if on a lonely island,” wrote the Swedish author, Atterbohm, “and conducted the flood of his sombre demoniac harmonies with the strangest of motions. Thus, for instance, he commanded *pianissimo* by kneeling and extending his arm downward to the floor; at *fortissimo* he then sprang up like a relieved elastic bow, appeared to grow beyond his length, and opened his arms wide.” In the last movement, Beethoven conducted more slowly than the tempo taken by the performers, so that when the music came to an end he was still beating time for its final measures. Fräulein Caroline Unger, one

of the soloists, then took the Master gently by the arm, and with tears in her eyes turned him around to the audience to receive an ovation that he could not hear.

The Ninth is Beethoven's highest flight of fancy in the symphonic form. Though in it he may occasionally have failed to realize fully his sublime conception, it is one of the indestructible masterpieces in the entire realm of art. Nowhere before—not even in the *Eroica*—is Beethoven's poetic speech so pregnant with meaning. The first movement opens with the statement of the first subject after sixteen introductory bars projecting a setting of awe and mystery. This subject is given a development of Gargantuan outlines, rising to heights of passion and dramatic power rare even with Beethoven. The second movement is a Scherzo in a mood of rather hysterical joy (the tympani are used with intoxicating effect throughout the movement). No nobler note of humanity, no more poignant note of compassion, no more moving note of sublimity, is sounded anywhere in music than in the third movement, an Adagio molto e cantabile, comprising two themes with their variations. In the fourth movement, Beethoven first ingeniously recapitulates the principal themes of the first three movements, then—dismissing them as inadequate for his expression of joy—introduces a new melody which becomes the principal subject. First introduced by the 'cellos, then carried on by the violins, it is finally sung by the tenor to the words of Schiller's ode after a brief exhortation by the baritone: "O brothers, no longer sound these sad tones, let us now raise our voices and sing of joy!" The choral passages include the Recitative (the opening exhortation for baritone); a Quartet and chorus (first rendition of the Joy theme); Tenor solo and Chorus; Chorus; Chorus; Quartet and Chorus; and a final Chorus in prestissimo.

Recommended recording: CM-591 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy).

## TRIO

### *Trio in B-flat major, "Archduke"*

The B-flat major Trio, Op. 97, is the most important of Beethoven's works in this form. Dedicated to his Imperial pupil the Archduke Rudolph, it is always called by his title. The first movement, Allegro, opens with a noble and majestic subject whose pattern is much like that of the first subject of the first Rasumovsky Quartet (Op. 59, No. 1). Of the Scherzo that follows, Robert Haven Schauffler says that it is "one of the Master's foremost contributions to this form of his invention—the form in which the lion of wit was first successfully made to lie down with the lamb of melody." But it is the third movement, Andante cantabile, which most emphatically endears the *Archduke* to chambermusic lovers. To quote Mr. Schauffler again: "The Andante cantabile . . . casts the dust more completely aside and nakedly rides the air of a more astral region than any other music whatever—unless it be the *Cavatina* of the B flat quartet (Op. 130). This is especially true in the deep organ har-



monies of the theme . . . and in the pure unearthly ecstasy of the recitative-like coda." The rondo finale has always been something of a disappointment to admirers of the *Archduke*, who regard it as falling below the level attained in the first three movements.

Recommended recording: VM-949 (Heifetz; Rubinstein; Feuermann).

## BELLINI

VINCENZO BELLINI, b. Catania, Sicily, 1801. Studied at the Naples Conservatory, composing his first opera while still at school. In 1831 he produced his earliest masterpiece, *La Sonnambula*, following it with *Norma* late in 1831, and *I Puritani* in 1834. He died in Paris in 1835 at the age of thirty-three.

THE outstanding quality of Bellini's operatic genius was his melodic fertility. "The lyricism of Bellini," wrote Ildebrando Pizzetti, "expresses itself in a song that gushes forth with the essence of an emotion that brings the drama to a resolution like a fire which is ignited after it emits hot sparks. And this song, gushing forth, becomes a stream, a river, finally an ocean that rolls away to the distance towards the immense horizon. . . . Bellini created a song that is ample, marvelous, unique. Unique is the song of the final scene of *Norma*, unique is the one which accompanies the closing of the first act of the *Sonnambula*, and unique is the song which can be found in the most important scenes of *Puritani*."

But Bellini was much more than a melodist. Wagner emphasized this fact. "Bellini," he wrote, "is one of my predilections, because his music is strongly felt and intimately bound up with the words." Through his recitatives, and through the way in which his music expressed the dramatic situations of his books, Bellini was working towards a closer union between words and music.

## OPERA

### *Norma*

In four acts, book by Giuseppe Felice Romani, first performed at La Scala, Milan, on December 26, 1831.

Bellini composed *Norma* in 1831, and himself selected the singers who should appear in it. The première was a failure. Bellini, hidden in the orchestra pit, heard hissing and exclamations of disapproval. "I have just come from the Scala," he wrote that night to a friend. "First performance of *Norma*. Would you believe it? Fiasco! Fiasco! Serious fiasco! To tell the truth, the public was severe. Apparently it had come for the precise purpose of passing

judgment on me, and eagerly wished to subject my poor *Norma* to as sad a fate as the Druidess."

With its second performance, however, the opera began to find friends, and in the event proved sufficiently appealing to run forty-three times. Nor were many years to pass before *Norma* received the full measure of recognition. In 1836, the then unknown Richard Wagner proclaimed it a masterpiece. "The action, bare of all theatrical *coups* and dazzling effects, reminds one of the dignity of Greek tragedy. . . . Those who can hear in *Norma* only the usual Italian tinkle are not worthy of serious consideration. This music is noble and great, simple and grandiose in style. The very fact that there is style in this music makes it important for our time, a time of experiments and lack of form."

The action of the opera takes place during the Roman occupation of Druidic Gaul. Norma, high priestess of the Druids, secretly marries the Roman Proconsul, Pollio, violating her vow. After they have had two children, Pollio's love for Norma is gone; he is now in love with Adalgisa, a priestess in the temple of Irminsul. Adalgisa, ignorant of the fact that Pollio is married to Norma, confides to Norma that she loves him, and begs to be absolved from her holy vows. This revelation of Pollio's infidelity enrages both women, and when Pollio attempts to snatch his beloved from the altar, Norma calls upon the Druids to capture him. Pollio is brought to judgment before Norma, who demands that he either renounce Adalgisa or die. Pollio prefers death. Norma then tears the sacred wreath from her brow and insists that she, not Pollio, is guilty. Pollio, moved by her generosity, joins her at the funeral pyre.

"To the listener of today," wrote F. Bonavia on the centenary of the première, "the dramatic qualities of *Norma* appear in quite a new light, and it is these that mainly account for the opera's perennial vitality. . . . He takes us at once *in medias res*: the first scene is highly dramatic in tone, immersing us in that atmosphere of high passions which justifies the actions of the characters. Pollio's recitatives in the next scene give us a taste of [Bellini's] effective fitting of the music to the words. . . . From his very first operas, Bellini's recitatives stand out . . . but in *Norma* they are perfectly welded into the opera, marking the salient points of the plot."

The most famous single excerpt from *Norma* is, of course, the soprano cavatina in Act I, "*Casta Diva*," one of the most beautiful arias in all opera. Other famous numbers include the tenor aria "*Meco all' altar di Venere*" and the alto "*Sgombra e la sacra selva*," both from Act I; the duet for soprano and alto "*Mira, O Norma*" from Act III; "*Guerra, guerra!*" for soprano and chorus, and the "*Ah crudele!*" duet for soprano and tenor from Act IV.

Recommended recording: Decca 25900-17 (Eiar Chorus, Orchestra, Soloists—Gui).

### ***I Puritani***

In three acts, book by Count Carlo Pepoli, first presented at the Théâtre des Italiens in Paris on January 25, 1835.

Rossini stood godfather for Bellini's last opera. In 1834 he encouraged the younger man to come to Paris for the purpose of writing an opera expressly for the Théâtre des Italiens. Though Pepoli's book was confused and sluggish, Bellini rose to some of his highest flights of inspiration in this work, some of the arias being among his most beautiful.

The next season of the Théâtre des Italiens was opened with a repetition of *I Puritani* (September 1835), the performance being coincidental with the eve of Bellini's funeral. During the entire performance, singers, orchestral players, and audience sobbed with grief. After the evening's presentation, the singers and musicians combined in a monumental requiem service for the composer, directed by Cherubini and Rossini, at the Church of the Invalides.

The story takes place in the mid-17th century, in an England torn by civil war. Elvira, daughter of Queen Henrietta Maria (who is a prisoner in a Plymouth fort), is in love with a Cavalier, Lord Arthur Talbot. She prevails on her mother to authorize the marriage, and is smuggled into the prison so that the ceremony may be performed there. Lord Arthur, however, takes this opportunity to effect Queen Henrietta's escape; and for this treachery he is punished. Elvira, knowing nothing of her lover's self-sacrifice, goes insane over his supposed faithlessness. Talbot, condemned to be shot, is saved at the last moment by a messenger's report that he has been pardoned by Cromwell, now victorious over the Royalists. Talbot having meanwhile been enabled to make the necessary explanations to Elvira, she recovers from her insanity and the lovers are reunited.

Cecil Gray has pointed out that, although *I Puritani* is not the best of Bellini's operas, it is the best integrated. "It has not the same stylistic inequalities, and the general level of inspiration is probably higher, although never rising to quite the same heights as the best things in *Norma* and *La Sonnambula*."

The most famous portions of the opera are the tenor aria, "*O te, o cara, amor talora*" and the soprano aria "*Son vergin vezzosa*" from Act I; the Mad Scene (soprano), the soprano aria "*Vien, diletto*," and the duet for baritone and bass "*Il rival salvar tu puoi*" from Act II; and the tenor aria "*Credeasi misera*" from Act III.

Recommended recording: "*Credeasi misera*" C-D11551 (Solari).

### ***La Sonnambula***

In two acts, book by Giuseppe Felice Romani, first performed at the Teatro Carcano, Milan, on March 6, 1831.

*La Sonnambula* was the first of Bellini's operas to indicate the extent of his creative powers. Its première at the Teatro Carcano was a sensation, to be followed by performances throughout Europe.

In Switzerland, Amina (a somnambulist) is to marry Elvino. One night, at an inn, while walking in her sleep, Amina enters the room of Rodolfo,

a young lord, and is discovered by the landlady. The incident becomes a village scandal, the consequence of which is that Elvino discards Amina for the landlady. Then, on another night shortly afterward, Amina again walks in her sleep, across a frail bridge, and to safety—into the arms of the awaiting Elvino, who now understands and is ready to forgive.

In spite of this rather silly story, Bellini rises to moments of such great beauty and pathos that some writers have been tempted to compare the opera to a Theocritus pastoral. In their discussion of this opera, Brockway and Weinstock wrote: "A brief musical tale, notable for its straightforwardness and unwillingness to spin itself out to irrelevant lengths, this little opera is primarily pleasant entertainment. . . . *La Sonnambula* is as romantic as *Der Freischütz*, but its romanticism is Italian, delicately tinted by what was doubtless a superficial acquaintance with the current fashion in European literature. There is an idyllic, a positively sentimental note here traceable to that faded chronicler of French Darbys and Joans, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. The idyllic note, miscalled 'elegiac,' was Bellini's peculiar forte, and he illustrated it in *La Sonnambula* with melodies . . . that seem at their most characteristic here, because here in their purest form."

The best pages of the opera include the soprano cavatina "*Come per me sereno*," the duets for soprano and tenor "*Prendi, l'anel ti dono*," and "*Son geloso del zeffiro*," all from Act I; the Sleep-walking Scene, and the aria for soprano and chorus "*Ah! non giunge*" from Act II.

Recommended recordings: Sleep-walking Scene, C-9015M (Muzio); "*Ah! non giunge*," C-D1646 (Guglielmetti).

## BENNETT

ROBERT RUSSELL BENNETT, b. Kansas City, Mo., 1894. Studied with Carl Busch in Kansas City, and Nadia Boulanger in Paris. He won the Guggenheim Fellowship in 1927 and 1928. In 1926-27 his Symphony won honorable mention in a contest conducted by *Musical America*, and two and a half years later he won the R.C.A. symphonic award for two orchestral works. He has divided his time since then between serious music and jazz, becoming one of the best jazz orchestrators of our time. He has also written music and prepared orchestrations for Hollywood.

THOUGH many of Bennett's serious works are written in a jazz idiom, others reveal a catholic style and an almost classical approach. Astute in his technique, and endowed with a fine imagination and good taste, Bennett has written many works (including an opera, *Maria Malibran*) to command the admiration of musicians. He writes particularly well for orchestra, and is a master of instrumentation.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

*Eight Etudes*

In 1938, the Columbia Broadcasting System commissioned Bennett to compose this work, and in the same year it was introduced over the Columbia network by the C.B.S. Symphony Orchestra directed by Howard Barlow. Mr. Bennett's detailed description follows.

"The Etudes are designed to serve an orchestra in much the same way as etudes for solo instruments serve those instruments; in other words, to present an attractive exterior filled with problems of orchestral playing, in balance, in conducting, and even (in the matter of orchestral color) for the composer himself. As with many of Debussy's piano preludes, each of these Etudes has a dedication at its end; the dedication—in both cases—having been written after the music was completed.

"I. Allegro con brio—is full of ambition, enthusiasm, vigor, and polite fun, and is dedicated to Walter Damrosch.

"II. Andantino—is philosophic and tender, rising to considerable heights of insistent power. It is to Aldous Huxley.

"III. Allegretto scherzando—is in rapid  $\frac{5}{8}$  time with an exaggerated waltz in Viennese, or rather in Continental style, for trio. This is to Noel Coward.

"IV. Bien animato, quasi una fantasia—pictures the profound art of baseball pitching, often referred to as a 'classic' when the pitcher wins. The thrill of a 'King' Carl Hubbell strike-out is at its substance, and it is dedicated to him.

"V. Alla marcia—is a nasty patrol wherein we can hear and almost see a parade of discordant and wrangling uniforms pass by. It is dedicated to all dictators.

"VI. Adagio e sincero—is the antithesis of the march of the dictators, and is dedicated to human faith, or to its personification in fiction, the Grand Lama.

"VII. Con grazia—is the prettiest and most graceful of the Etudes. It is to a much-admired painter, Eugene Spreicher.

"VIII. Allegro animato—chatters, screams, laughs, stops to make up its face, reveals alluring curves, tries hard to excite us, and ends in a chorale-like climax which reveals underlying strength and seriousness. It is dedicated to the ladies."

## SYMPHONY

*A Lincoln Symphony*

*A Lincoln Symphony* was one of the two orchestral works by Bennett to win the Victor award in 1929–30. It was composed in Berlin in 1929, and was introduced by the Philadelphia Orchestra, under Leopold Stokowski, in the fall of 1931. "The work comprises the four movements of the classic sym-

phony," explains the composer, "but in each movement I have used two outstanding attributes of Lincoln's character as the inspiration for the themes. The first movement, in sonata form, expresses his simplicity and his sadness. The opening subject, for two clarinets, bass clarinet, and oboe solo, expresses the first trait, his simplicity, together with his sweetness. The horns soon betray the locale of Lincoln's home, suggesting a rhythm dear to the mid-West fiddlers and banjoists of a scant hundred years ago. In its recapitulation, the first theme takes on power and grandeur. The second theme is expressive of Lincoln's sadness. . . . It is brought to a climax and cut off, while we listen to a distant drum and a faint suggestion of *The Union Forever* from the clarinet and bass clarinet. A cry of pain seems to answer this thought of struggle and suffering, but soon the supreme inspiration of divine help irradiates the scene. In the development section, the music becomes stronger and more confident; but the second theme brings sadness again, now of a graver character, more philosophical, almost serene.

"The slow movement, which I have entitled 'His Affection and His Faith,' conveys something of the sentiment of young America of that day when women were worshipped. The music sighs out a suggestion of the story of Lincoln's tragic early love affair.

"The third movement is entitled 'His Humor and His Weakness.' It pictures the human side, the external side of Lincoln—the Lincoln who delighted in telling risqué stories and playing pranks. The music is a scherzo, with a barn dance in the middle, and general devilment all around.

"I have entitled the finale 'His Greatness and His Sacrifice.' I intended the music to proclaim what I felt to be the triumph of a great soul, rich, unbending, inevitable. Departing a little from the chief aim of the symphony as an expression of character *per se*, I have turned, in the course of this movement, to the thought of his sacrifice, and have told orchestrally the story of his assassination, and I have tried to suggest the realization by the world of its loss, ending with the sound as of a thousand chimes and a final chant in memory of the great soul that has passed away."

# BERG

ALBAN BERG, b. Vienna, 1885, a pupil of Arnold Schönberg, whose influence on the younger man was far-reaching. Berg began his composing career as a romantic, but he soon adopted the Schönberg idiom and became a master of it. During the First World War, he served in the Austrian army. Later, he completed the masterpiece upon which he had been working since 1914—the opera *Wozzeck*. He died in Vienna in 1935.

**E**VEN after Berg turned to atonality, he was still the romanticist. Though using the twelve-tone system, he injected such warmth in his music that he is called the romanticist of the Schönberg school. His works are few in number, but what he composed reveals a remarkable intelligence, a sound grasp of technique, and an engaging personality. Berg also composed a second opera, *Lulu*, a concert aria for soprano and orchestra (*Der Wein*), a string quartet, and a *Lyric Suite* for string quartet.

## CONCERTO

### *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*

Berg was commissioned by the American violinist Louis Krasner to write for him a concerto for violin and orchestra. The death of a dear personal friend, a young girl, was the direct impetus for Berg's composition of this work, and he intended it as a requiem "to the memory of an angel." Curiously enough, it proved to be Berg's own requiem: he did not live to hear it performed.

But the "angel" lives. She is presented to us in a full length portrait in the first movement, an engaging essay in characterology. The second movement (there are only two) tells how and why she dies, is transfigured, attains to peace and a wanted tranquillity.

Obviously exalted in character and dealing with an eternal theme, the concerto is yet highly personal and achieves a muted simplicity through the use of unsophisticated melodies. This is no inconsiderable feat in view of Berg's adherence to the twelve tone system of his master, Arnold Schönberg.

In harmony with its subject the first movement is characterized by grace and lightness and charm. The second movement, equally graceful and rhythmic, is much more forceful and dramatic in its statement. It is a profoundly emotional page of music, containing a brief quotation from Bach (the chorale *It Is Enough*) and a repetition of the naive theme of the first movement.

The concerto was introduced in Barcelona in 1936 by Louis Krasner, who has since performed it throughout the United States.

Recommended recording: CM-465 (Krasner; Cleveland Orchestra—Rodzinski).

## OPERA

*Wozzeck*

In three acts, libretto by the composer, first performed at the Berlin Staatsoper on December 14, 1925.

Berg was strongly fascinated by Georg Büchner's tormented and bitter expressionistic drama *Wozzeck*, which had been written in the early nineteenth century, had been lost for many years, and then was rediscovered in 1878. Berg first began to work on the opera in 1914. His labors were interrupted by the First World War. When he returned to civilian life, he resumed work and brought the score to completion in 1921. Three excerpts were played at the Frankfurt Festival in 1924, the success of which inspired the complete production at the Berlin Staatsoper the following year. Its unusual orchestration (an ensemble was called for including a military band, a restaurant orchestra, high-pitched violins, an accordion, an out-of-tune upright piano, a bombardon, and a chamber orchestra); its unorthodox use of the human voice (*Sprechstimme*); and the parade of ghastly sounds—all these invited controversy. There were those who called Berg a genius. One critic exclaimed that this was "the most striking musical event in the history of opera since *Pelléas and Mélisande*." Others considered him a madman. "Berg is a creator of sounds terrifying to the ear," wrote Max Marschalk in *Die Vossische Zeitung*; while Paul Zschorlich wrote in the *Deutsche Zeitung*: "As I was leaving the State Opera I had the sensation of having been not in a public theater but in an insane asylum. On the stage, in the orchestra, in the stalls—plain madmen." When, a year later, *Wozzeck* was introduced in Prague it created such disorders and riots that the police ordered its withdrawal from the repertoire,

*Wozzeck* was introduced to America in Philadelphia and in New York in March 1931, under the baton of Leopold Stokowski.

*Wozzeck*, a soldier—symbol of the downtrodden and the helpless—is in love with Marie, who is unfaithful to him. She is attentive to a Drum Major who thrashes *Wozzeck* within an inch of his life when the latter reprimands her. *Wozzeck* is finally provoked to murder Marie at the edge of a pond. He himself dies accidentally in the waters of the pond when he tries to retrieve his blood-stained knife.

Berg thus explained his artistic purpose in this opera: "I never contemplated a reform of the opera through the composition of *Wozzeck*. . . . Aside from the desire to create good music . . . I intended nothing more than to bring to the theater that which by right belongs to the theater. I wanted to create music at every moment conscious of its responsibility to the drama—yes, even more, drawing from within itself those elements necessary for the transposition of drama into reality; an achievement that demands of the composer the resolution of all essential tasks of stage direction. This was to be done without violating the autonomy of the music, without interference by extra-musical elements. That this occurred through the adoption of older



musical forms (which was regarded as one of the most important of my alleged reforms) was of course self-evident. In some respects, their absorption into the realm of the opera—to so great an extent—might appear novel. . . . I shall reveal what I believe to be my exclusive contribution: No matter how well one may be acquainted with the musical forms to be found in this opera, with its stringent and logical construction, with the artistic skill exhibited in its details, I demand that from the moment the curtain rises till the moment it falls, no one in the audience shall be conscious of this diversity of fugues, inventions, suite forms, and sonata forms, variations, and passacaglias—no one, I repeat, be filled with anything but the *idea* of the opera, which far transcends the individual fortunes of Wozzeck.”

## BERLIOZ

HECTOR BERLIOZ, b. Côte-Saint-André, France, 1803. Pupil of Lesueur at the Paris Conservatory. A Mass (1825) was his first performed work. Five years later he won the Prix de Rome, soon after the completion of his first major work, the *Symphonie fantastique*. In 1833, he married the actress Henrietta Smithson, but the marriage proved unhappy and resulted in virtual separation. Berlioz fell prey to despondency brought on by his marital problems and heightened by financial difficulties and hostility to his music. But he continued to compose, during this period writing some of his greatest works including the dramatic symphony *Romeo and Juliet*. His last years were spent in sickness and loneliness, and he died in Paris in 1869.

**B**ERLIOZ was one of the most original figures in the history of music. He was the true Romantic, one of the first in music. “Practically every important tendency in the romantic movement,” wrote A. W. Locke, “is represented in Berlioz’s music.” He defied convention and tradition, and looked fearlessly into the future. Always he was the experimenter, writing for large masses and incorporating unusual instruments in his orchestra, striving ever for new avenues of expression for the musical art. He opened new vistas for music in the art of orchestration, of which he was the consummate master. “He possessed to a high degree,” wrote W. H. Hadow, “every quality which successful scoring implies: a complete knowledge of the strength and weakness of each instrument, great skill in treatment and combination, ready invention and boundless audacity.” He also enriched the capacity of music to translate ideas. In French music, he stands as the great pioneer who, as Julien Tiersot remarked, was “the torch which illuminated the path upon which all future composers were to travel.”

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

Selections from *The Damnation of Faust*

("Minuet of the Will-o'-the-Wisps"; "Dance of the Sylphs"; "Rakoczy March")

"A landmark in my life," wrote Berlioz, "was the reading of Goethe's *Faust*. I could not lay it down, but read and read and read—at table, in the streets, at the theater." Between 1828 and 1830 he wrote music for various scenes in Goethe's *Faust*. "Some of the ideas were good, but I knew also how hopelessly immature and badly written they were." Soon after its publication, Berlioz discarded this work. During a trip through Central Europe, however, he decided to rework this earlier material, add new numbers, and fashion a dramatic legend. The text he used for *The Damnation of Faust* (Op. 24) was partly his own work and partly that of Gandonnière. His dramatic legend was introduced at the Opéra-Comique in Paris in 1846, under his own direction. It was a failure. "It was twice performed to half-empty houses," Berlioz wrote, "and elicited no more attention than if I had been the humblest of the students at the Conservatory." On June 19, 1847, it was presented in Berlin with great success. Since then it has often been presented both in Europe and in America as an opera.

Three selections from this dramatic legend are frequently heard at symphony concerts:

I. "Minuet of the Will-o'-the-Wisps": This is from the third part of the dramatic legend, and describes how Mephisto summons the evil spirits and the will-o'-the-wisps to surround Marguerite's house. The Minuet concludes the number.

II. "Dance of the Sylphs": This is taken from the second part. Faust has fallen asleep to the song of gnomes and sylphs. They dance before him as he sleeps, and while they do so the image of Marguerite comes to him in a vision.

III. "Rakoczy March": A Hungarian march is rendered appropriate by the fact that in the early part of the legend Faust is made to wander in the fields of Hungary. Actually, the *Rakoczy March* was written on commission for a special Berlioz concert held in Pesth in 1846. Under Berlioz's baton it swept the audience into a frenzy of excitement. "I begin the March with a trumpet passage in the rhythm of the melody, after which the theme itself appears pianissimo in the flutes and clarinets, accompanied by the strings pizzicato. This was a treatment to which my audience was quite unaccustomed, and at first they listened merely with respectful attention. When the crescendo arrived, and fragments of the March were heard amidst the thunder of cannon from the big drum, they woke up; and when the final explosion burst upon them in all the fury of the orchestra, the shrieks and cries which rent the hall were positively terrific, and so extraordinary as fairly to frighten me. In fact, from that moment the rest of the piece was inaudible amid the clamor of the house." The theme Berlioz used for his March was a famous

one in Hungary and was believed to have been written by Michael Barna, a court musician of Prince Franz Rakoczy.

Recommended recordings: "Minuet of the Will-o'-the-Wisps," "Dance of the Sylphs," and "Rakoczy March," CM-X94 (London Philharmonic—Beecham).

### *Roman Carnival Overture*

The *Roman Carnival Overture* (Op. 9) was originally intended by Berlioz as the prelude to the second act of his opera *Benvenuto Cellini*. This opera was first performed in 1838, and in 1843 Berlioz took several themes from the opera—principally a Saltarello subject—and incorporated them into an independent symphonic work. Today, the *Roman Carnival* is accepted as one of the most representative of Berlioz's works. It opens with the dashing Saltarello theme: then—following a brief pause—comes a beautiful singing passage for English horn, the principal motive of the opera. These two subjects are developed skilfully into a work of great dramatic effectiveness.

Recommended recording: V-119008 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

## SYMPHONIES

### *Fantastic Symphony*

The *Symphonie fantastique* (Op. 14), composed in 1829 and subtitled "An Episode in the Life of an Artist," was born out of Berlioz's passion for Henrietta Smithson, the Shakespearean actress who later became his wife. He had seen her in a Paris performance of *Hamlet* and fell in love with her at once. He was determined to meet her, to impress upon her the depth of his love. Failing to do so, he took lodgings near hers—only to learn that she was leaving Paris. Feeling the need for some outlet, he decided to express his passion in a large work. A rumor that Henrietta Smithson was engaged to another man caused him, in a fit of rage, to revise his symphony so that it might symbolize not the fullness of his love but the treachery of his beloved. (At the first performance of the symphony Berlioz even planned to distribute leaflets to the audience explaining its revised meaning, but fortunately was discouraged from doing so by his friends. However, he did include the comment concerning the "Witches' Sabbath" movement that his beloved "is now only a courtesan worthy to figure in such an orgy.")

Berlioz planned the first performance of this work—in Paris on December 5, 1830—as a gesture of defiance to Henrietta. "I hope that the wretched woman will be there that day," he remarked. She did not come; she was appearing that night at the Opéra. But the house was filled with distinguished musicians and literary men. Of these, the advanced guard were ecstatic in their praises, calling the new work the music of the future, while the conservatives condemned it.

Henrietta Smithson did not hear the Symphony until two years later when Berlioz had returned from his Italian sojourn. For that concert, Berlioz

graciously revised his programmatic material to exclude references to the "courtesan." Henrietta, interpreting the symphony to mean that the hero poisoned himself for love of her, was touched and flattered. At this concert, Berlioz was playing the drums, and it was said that each time his eyes met Smithson's he beat the drums with redoubled fury.

Eventually, of course, Berlioz won his Henrietta—though he was soon to learn that it was hardly the triumph he had anticipated.

The symphony is in five movements, to which the composer appended a detailed program. The first movement, "Visions and Passions," is devoted to the meeting of the hero and the ideal woman, and of the awakening of a great love. In the second movement, "The Ball," the hero is immersed in reveries about his beloved, and continues to dream of her in the third movement, "Scenes in the Country," where the beauty of Nature reminds him of her loveliness. The hero decides to commit suicide with opium. Instead he succeeds only in inducing horrible nightmares. In one of these he kills his beloved and is to be executed for the crime. The fourth movement, "March to the Gallows," depicts his execution; and in the closing movement, "Witches' Sabbath," the hero sees witches indulging in a frenzied dance around the bier, a dance which ends with a mock funeral.

From many points of view, the Symphony is an epoch-making work. It utilizes a recurrent theme to tie the five movements into a unified whole (the theme subjected to changes as demanded by the mood and atmosphere of the different movements). Berlioz called this "recurrent theme" the "*idée fixe*"—and as such it foreshadows the Wagnerian *Leitmotif*. Besides this, the symphony brings the science of instrumentation to new stages of development; and, in its programmatic writing, it later inspired the program music of Liszt and Richard Strauss.

In 1838, Berlioz received a cash gift of 20,000 francs for this Symphony. For a long time it was believed that Paganini was the donor, but later research disclosed that the benefactor was Armand Bertini, editor of the *Journal des Débats*, a great admirer of Berlioz. Armand had Paganini present the award to Berlioz because he felt that it would be more impressive if tendered by one great artist to another.

Recommended recording: CM-488 (Cleveland Orchestra—Rodzinski).

### *Romeo and Juliet*

Two forces drove Berlioz to compose this dramatic symphony. One was his admiration for Shakespeare, and the other was his passion for Henrietta Smithson, whose most successful role was that of Juliet. The symphony, however, was composed in the winter of his love affair—in 1839, six years after his marriage to Henrietta, and long after his passion for her had been spent. However, Berlioz had not forgotten his one-time ardor or his one-time adoration of her art; and he wrote his symphony in recollection of these feelings.

*Romeo and Juliet* (Op. 17) is for orchestra, soloists, and chorus. It is sub-

divided into three sections; and these sections comprise twelve individual numbers, the high moments of the Shakespearean play being chosen for musical treatment. It is dramatic music, and poetic, with an occasional touch of spiritual beauty. Berlioz never achieves the singableness of Gounod, but his melody has more spine and character and individuality. There is in Berlioz's version of the Shakespeare play a dramatic intensity, a philosophic depth, which Gounod never realized. In certain passages Berlioz the creative artist rises to such heights that, as Ernest Newman wrote, "his spirit touched to finer issues, he sings, not Berlioz, but humanity as a whole. He is now what every great artist is instinctively—a philosopher as well as a singer." Among these passages are the unforgettable love music of Part II, which Berlioz considered his greatest music; the closing scene in Juliet's tomb, one of the most eloquent pages in all French music; and the exquisitely orchestrated "Queen Mab Scherzo."

Recommended recordings: "Romeo's Reverie and the Fête at the Capulets," Part II, C-DB1230-1 (London Philharmonic—Harty); "Queen Mab," C-67422D (Halle Orchestra—Halle).

## BIZET

ALEXANDRE-CÉSAR-LÉOPOLD (called Georges) BIZET, b. Paris, 1838. Studied at the Paris Conservatory, winning the Prix de Rome in 1857. He first attracted attention in 1863 with *Les Pêcheurs de perles* (The Pearl Fishers). Other operas followed, but not until 1872 did he write his masterpiece, the one work by which he is best remembered today—*Carmen*. This was introduced at the Opéra-Comique in Paris on March 3, 1875, and was moderately successful. In June of that year Bizet died, too early to see his beloved opera accepted by the world as a masterpiece.

OF Bizet's works there have survived only a single aria from the now-forgotten *Les Pêcheurs de perles*, "*Je crois entendre encore*" (Recommended recording: V-15544—Crooks), the *L'Arlésienne* suites, and *Carmen*. A rather charming, but derivative, Symphony in C major was recently revived (Recommended recording: VM-742, London Philharmonic—Goehr), but it is hardly likely that it will retain any permanent position in the symphonic repertoire. Thus it can be said that Bizet's great fame rests securely on only one work; but that work is the complete realization of his creative style. To it he brought his marvelous melodic gift, his flair for brilliant orchestration, his genius for atmospheric color, and his fine dramatic instinct, and through it he has proved his right to be considered a great composer.

## OPERA

*Carmen*

In four acts, libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, first performed at the Opéra-Comique in Paris on March 3, 1875.

In June of 1872, Bizet informed a friend that "I am asked to write three acts for the Opéra-Comique. Meilhac and Halévy will do the piece. It will be bright, but of a brightness that allows style." The original story was by Prosper Mérimée—expurgated and greatly revised so as not to shock opera-goers' sensibilities; *Carmen* herself, for example, was transformed from a petty thief into a glamorous heroine.

Sentimentalists would have us believe that *Carmen* was at first a failure. As a matter of fact, the opera fared comparatively well. Of course, some in the audience were startled by the passion of the work, and by the sight of girls smoking on the stage; and some critics carped at Bizet's subservience to Wagner in his use of the *Leitmotif*. But for the most part the reception was good. Reyer praised Bizet for his "fine harmony and suitable scoring," while the critic of *Le Courrier de Paris* wrote emphatically that "the work is one of those which redound to a musician's credit." The public, too, responded favourably—favourably enough, at least, for the opera to attain the respectable number of forty-seven presentations.

Yet it was no triumph, either. Not until after Bizet's death did it conquer the world of music—though it then conquered it permanently. In 1878, it was performed in Marseille, Lyon, Bordeaux, St. Petersburg, Naples, Florence, Ghent, Hanover, Mainz, and New York. A revival at the Opéra-Comique in Paris on April 21, 1883, was an unmistakable sensation. Nietzsche heard the opera twenty times and proclaimed it one of the genuine masterpieces in operatic literature. Tchaikovsky, introduced to *Carmen* in 1880, prophesied that within ten years it would be the most popular opera in the world. By the end of the century, hardly an opera house in the world but was exploiting Bizet's masterpiece.

Today, of course, it is one of the established favorites in the operatic repertory. It has earned this fame, for it stands among the operas of the world in solitary splendor. "*Carmen*," wrote D. C. Parker, "is unique in two senses. It is unique in the realm of opera; there is no work quite like it. It is unique also in that it stands head and shoulders above everything else Bizet has produced. . . . I place *Carmen* high by reason of the quality of its inspiration, the attraction of its themes, the handling of its ideas, and the musicianship displayed throughout. There is characterization, too, skilfully devised."

Most of the opera was subjected by Bizet to painstaking revision. For instance, the "Habanera" was revised no fewer than fifteen times. On the other hand, the famous "Toreador Song" was interpolated in the opera as an afterthought—as a concession to plebeian tastes. The original "Toreador Song" was considered too majestic, and Bizet was urged to substitute some-

thing much more popular; in some haste he wrote a new aria and, presenting it to the conductor of the Opéra-Comique, remarked bitterly: "Ah, they want filth?—Well, here it is!" But this "filth" has never lost its power to elicit an ovation in the opera house.

The authenticity of the Spanish idiom in *Carmen* has roused considerable controversy. The Spanish composer Joaquín Turina, and many critics with him, have damned *Carmen* as merely pseudo-Spanish music. Such condemnation is not deserved. *Carmen* is not authentic Spanish music, but Bizet never meant it to be. Though he utilized Spanish folk material, it was only to give the work its local color. He was trying to recreate the mood and atmosphere of Spain by using Spanish rhythms and tone colors; but his style of composition was French to the core—and *Carmen*, despite its background and setting, is a French and not a Spanish opera.

*Carmen*, the gypsy, is arrested for stabbing one of her friends in the cigarette factory in Seville. She exercises her seductive wiles on an officer, Don José, who helps her to escape and is thereupon imprisoned. On completing his sentence, Don José (forgetting his own true love, Micaela) again meets Carmen on the outskirts of the city. He becomes passionately infatuated, quarrels with one of his fellow-officers over her, and then (to evade punishment) escapes with her to the mountains where the two take refuge in the lair of a group of smugglers. Carmen soon tires of Don José, and turns to Escamillo, hero of the bull-ring. Meanwhile, Micaela makes her way to the smugglers' den and persuades Don José to go home to see his dying mother. José, however, cannot forget Carmen. He returns to beg for her love, and, angered by her apathy, he kills her.

The most famous *Carmen* arias are the "Habanera" for soprano (actually not original with Bizet but the work of Yradier!), the duet for soprano and tenor, "*Parle-moi de ma mère*," and the soprano "Seguidilla" all from Act I; the Gypsy Dance, the soprano "Gypsy Song," the "Toreador Song" for baritone and chorus, the "Flower Song" for tenor from Act II; the "Card Song" for soprano in Act III.

Recommended recording: VM-128 (La Scala Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra—Molajoli).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *L'Arlésienne Suites*

For the first performance of Alphonse Daudet's drama *L'Arlésienne*, in Paris in 1872, Bizet composed incidental music comprising twenty-seven pieces. The best of these were later made into two orchestral suites. In this music, Bizet succeeded felicitously in capturing the Provençal flavor of the Daudet play by appropriating actual Provençal melodies, and also by imitating characteristic rhythms and sonorities of authentic Provençal music.

The Suite No. 1, arranged by Bizet himself, includes: Prelude, Minuet,

Adagietto, Carillon. Suite No. 2, arranged by Ernest Guiraud, comprises: Pastorale, Intermezzo, Minuet, and Farandole.

The best numbers from the first suite are the Prelude (a rousing march tune adapted from an old Provençal folk song); the graceful Minuet; the Adagietto (a lovely poem for muted strings); and the Carillon (a heavily accented and vigorous theme set against the background of pealing bells). The best from the Suite No. 2 are the Minuet and the closing Farandole, the latter of which astutely combines the Provençal melody of the first suite with a vigorous Farandole dance.

Some conductors combine the favorite movements of both suites into one, and as such it includes the following sections: Prelude, Minuet, Adagietto, Minuet, and Farandole.

Recommended recordings: Suite No. 1, VM-62, (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski); Suite No. 2, VM-683 (Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler).

## BLOCH

ERNEST BLOCH, b. Geneva, Switzerland, 1880. Studied in Brussels with Ysaÿe and Rasse, and in Munich with Knorr and Thuille. His first major work, a symphony, was composed in 1902. In 1916, he came to America. Within the next few years he established his reputation in this country with a series of important performances. In 1920, he became director of the Cleveland Institute, holding this post for five years. In 1931, an endowment enabled him to settle temporarily in Europe, but he returned in 1934, and since that time has lived mostly in California.

THERE are three distinct periods in Bloch's creative career. The first produced his early works, like the opera *Macbeth* and the Symphony in C-sharp minor, in which his later style was suggested. A second period began in or about 1915 with Bloch's awakened racial consciousness. "I aspire to write Jewish music," he wrote at that time, "because it is the only way I can produce music of vitality." It was at this time that he wrote some of his most famous works, including the *Israel Symphony*, the *Three Jewish Poems*, and *Schelomo*. In his third period, Bloch shows less tendency to write Hebrew music, being motivated now by the aim of composing music for all races and creeds. Hebraic mannerisms still cling to this later work, but it is designed to express all mankind rather than any single race. In this category belong the Concerto Grosso, the Piano Quintet, *A Voice in the Wilderness*, and the Concerto for Violin and Orchestra.

Bloch's style is generally marked by barbaric ferocity and passion. It is savage in intensity, full of vitality and energy—though he is capable as well of writing slow movements touched with poetry and mysticism. His melodic



lines are fully developed; his rhythmic elements are freely used; and his harmonic speech is rich and original. Nobility and high-mindedness pervade his best work.

## CONCERTO

### *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*

Though the first sketches for this concerto were begun in 1930, the completed work was not ready until seven years later. The sketches, wrote Bloch, "arose mostly on the inspiration of the moment and with no preconceived idea of a Violin Concerto, though most of them were orchestrally or 'violinistically' conceived. . . . Music being for me a kind of language, it is easy to discover in the chosen material that went to make this Concerto, parentage or affinities, either in the expressively or the purely musical-thematic frame of the motives. They combine with each other in a rather intricate way throughout the score, appearing and disappearing like characters in a drama."

Completed in January, 1938, the work was introduced on December 15, 1938, by Joseph Szigeti and the Cleveland Orchestra directed by Rodzinski.

Like most of Bloch's larger works, the concerto is rhapsodic in character, with the usual Bloch breadth of form and passion of speech. The opening theme of the first movement (*Allegro deciso*) is in an American-Indian idiom, but the work as a whole has more of a Hebraic than an Indian character. The most effective of the three movements is the middle one, an *Andante*, in which the violin is made to intone a rare mystic beauty.

Recommended recording: CM-380 (Szigeti; Concerts du Conservatoire Orchestra—Münch).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *A Voice in the Wilderness*

Though performed without interruption, this symphonic poem is in six sections, for symphony orchestra and 'cello obbligato. Bloch composed it in 1936, and it was given its première by the Los Angeles Philharmonic under the baton of Otto Klemperer on January 21, 1937. Structurally, Bloch's original intention was to write alternate sections for the 'cello obbligato and the orchestra. In his own words, the obbligato was to repeat "in a sort of paraphrase that which appeared before its entrance. But this plan was modified; and even though this form (which I believe to be new) persists through five or six movements, the 'cello provides neither a 'variation of what precedes it, nor is it, strictly speaking, a paraphrase. The various movements follow and link with each other quite naturally. They are sometimes bound together by a barely perceptible thematic relationship or 'reminiscence,' but each has its own clearly defined character. The episodes in which the orchestra speaks alone are scored as a symphonic work *per se*, and not as *tutti*, or accom-

paniments. The 'cello has an expressive role, without endless displays of virtuosity—like the character in a drama. The sixth movement may be likened to a crowd in a joyous and somewhat barbaric mood, opposed by the 'cello solo as an individual."

This is not Hebrew music in the sense that the *Israel Symphony* is; it avoids the obvious technical devices of Hebrew ritual music. But in its poignancy and pain, in the sweeping wind of its rhythms, in its often oriental splendor of color, in its idealism and resignation, it is an expression of the Hebrew temperament. Opening with a sweeping figure for the 'cellos, followed by an emotional outcry from the entire orchestra, there rises the voice in the wilderness—pronounced by the solo 'cello—speaking a language of prophetic mysticism and sublimity which finds its roots in the Bible. A spiritual incandescence ignites the music, making it glow with an almost other-worldly radiance. This is music written with conciseness and inevitable logic, moved by a volcanic dramatic force, and touched at all times with poetry and introspection.

### *Concerto Grosso*

Bloch composed the *Concerto Grosso* to prove to his students at the Cleveland Institute that it was not necessary to shatter all established music rules and traditions in order to be modern. He had accordingly decided to write a simple work in an old form, but to breathe into it the spirit of the twentieth century. It was composed in 1924–25, and was given its first performance at a concert of the Cleveland Institute Orchestra on June 1, 1925.

The fusion of the old and the new is here achieved with consummate skill. Though the concerto grosso form is never abused, it is music of our own time—dynamic, incisive, full of independence. The opening Prelude—introduced by a series of ponderous chords—is as contemporary in its strength as if Bloch had written atonally; yet the established harmonic and tonal laws are adhered to. The Prelude is followed by a Dirge of characteristic Bloch eloquence—a Hebraic sorrow that stabs the heart with its abandon and intensity. The third movement, entitled "Pastorale and Rustic Dances," is a happy conversion of old dances into twentieth-century idiom. The closing movement, a Fugue, has an atmosphere of mysticism which transforms a rigid form into a poetic utterance.

Recommended recording: VM-563 (Curtis Chamber Music Ensemble—Bailly).

### *Schelomo*

*Schelomo*, a Hebrew rhapsody for violoncello and orchestra, is Bloch's musical interpretation of the soul of a great Biblical Jew—King Solomon. It was composed in 1916, and first performed at a concert by the Society of the Friends of Music in New York under the direction of the composer, on May 3, 1917. It is a rhapsody full of nerves, emotion, and abandon; it has the quality of controlled hysteria. Oriental in its orchestration and harmoniza-

tion, filled with incisive rhythms, and with melodies that have a Biblical flavor, it is one of the happiest realizations of Bloch's Hebraic style. Two principal themes dominate the composition, the first, *Piu animato*, pronounced by the solo 'cello, and the second, *Allegro moderato*, introduced by the reeds before it is adopted by the solo instrument.

"The violoncello," wrote Guido M. Gatti, "with its ample breadth of phrasing, now melodic and with moments of superb lyricism, now declamatory and with robust dramatic lights and shades, lends itself to a reincarnation of Solomon in all his glory, surrounded by his thousand wives and concubines, with his multitude of slaves and warriors behind him. His voice resounds in the devotional silence, and the sentences of his wisdom sink into the heart as the seed into a fertile soil. . . . At times the sonorous voice of the violoncello is heard predominant amid a breathless and fateful obscurity, throbbing with persistent rhythms, again, it blends in a phantasmagorical paroxysm of polychromatic tones, shot through with the silvery clangors and frenzies of exultation. . . . The entire discourse of the soloist, vocal rather than instrumental, seems like the musical expression intimately conjoined with the Talmudic prose."

Recommended recording: VM-698 (Feuermann; Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

## QUARTET

### *Quartet*

In composing chamber works—whether a violin sonata, a quartet, or a quintet—Bloch does not produce music of intimate character. He breaks down the constricting barriers, and gives chamber music new scope and horizons. In his range of color and dynamics, in the expanse of his form, in the sweep of his melodic ideas, he writes chamber music as he might a tone poem or a symphony. Beyond this, whether writing for two, four, or five instruments, he assigns a striking individuality to each voice, giving it full potentialities for self-expression.

Bloch has provided his own programmatic material for this Quartet. "During the summer of 1915, a friend of mine, Alfred Pochon of the Flonzaley Quartet, visited me in the country near Geneva. I showed him, among other works, rough sketches of a string quartet. . . . Pochon . . . then advised me strongly to go on with the string quartet. In a few months the three first movements were completed (July, 1916). It was then necessary for me to leave for America. . . . I was dazed by American life, after the atmosphere of Europe. I could hardly find myself . . . it seemed another world, almost another planet (this country was still 'neutral'). However, I worked in a fever; and the last movement—the first music I wrote on this continent—was achieved in about a week.

"Thus this string quartet was composed at a period of double crisis: the

crisis of the world, at the outside, and the crisis of my own life, the expatriation from my native country, Switzerland. It certainly shows the traces of both. Without being an 'autobiography' . . . it embodies in a certain sense my *Weltanschauung* at the age of thirty-six—a kind of synthesis of my vision of the world at that period. No work of mine, since that time, can be compared to it in this respect.

"The whole quartet falls into the regular 'classical' form. It may appear very free at times, melodically, modally, rhythmically, but it certainly is neither 'rhapsodical' nor freer, for instance, than the first movement of the *Eroica*."

Recommended recording: CM-392 (Stuyvesant String Quartet).

## QUINTET

### *Quintet for Piano and Strings*

Bloch's masterpiece, the Piano Quintet, was composed in 1923, and was given its first performance on March 27 of that year at a concert by The League of Composers in New York.

It is a work remarkable for its architectonic construction. A single motive—which opens the work—grows and expands and develops into transformations of rare invention, becoming now a heroic expression, now a plangent threnody, now a brutal and savage cry of defiance. There is not a superfluous bar in the entire work, not an irrelevant theme. It is written concisely and with inevitable logic, music of high tensions (increased by the use of quarter-tones), of explosive emotions, of volatile moods. It is an unforgettable emotional utterance.

Not burdened by any program, and unconstricted by any identifying titles, the Quintet is Bloch's most religious document. Its religion does not consist in superficials, but rather is that of the philosopher, ennobling and elevating. It betrays the soul of the Jew without resorting to any Hebraic techniques. It was born from a profound and moving sincerity. Daring in its writing for the individual instruments, in its range of colors and effects, it is modern in spirit and character.

The Quintet is in three movements: *Agitato* is primitive and passionate; *Andante Mistico* is poetic; and *Allegro energico* is savage.

Recommended recording: VM-191 (Pro-Arte Quartet; Casell).

## SONATA

### *Sonata for Violin and Piano*

Bloch composed this work in 1920, and it was published two years later. Even within the intimate form of a violin sonata, Bloch has created music of power and dynamism. The melodic line with its savagely leaping intervals, the impulsive rhythms, and the sharply edged harmonies, all make a work

that is Hebraic in its passion and lack of emotional restraint, and at the same time high-minded and original in thought. Technically, the sonata is interesting in its application of the César Franck cyclic form: several of the themes are used in all three movements, providing the work with cohesion and unity.

Recommended recording: VM-498 (Gingold; Beryl Rubinstein).

## SYMPHONY

### *Israel Symphony*

"It is not my purpose or my desire to attempt a 'reconstruction' of Jewish music, or to base my works on melodies more or less authentic," wrote Bloch during his Hebraic period. "I am not an archaeologist. I hold that it is of first importance to write good, authentic music—*my own music*. It is the Jewish soul that interests me, the complex, glowing, agitated soul that I feel vibrating throughout the Bible . . . the freshness and naïveté of the Patriarchs, the violence of the prophetic Books; the Jew's savage love of justice; the despair of Ecclesiastes; the sorrow and immensity of the Book of Job; the sensuality of The Song of Songs. All this is in us, all this is in me, and it is the better part of me. It is all this that I endeavor to hear in myself, and to translate in my music: the sacred emotions of the race that slumbers far down in our soul."

This attempt to interpret the Jewish soul in music, to translate into music "the sacred emotions of the race," is found in the *Israel Symphony*. It was composed between 1912 and 1916, and was first performed by The Society of the Friends of Music in New York under the baton of the composer on May 3, 1917. It is in two movements, played without interruption: Allegro agitato and Andante moderato. In the second movement, human voices join the orchestra in intoning a Hebrew prayer.

It is not a consistent and integrated masterpiece, but it has sporadic pages of great beauty; there are passages in the second movement which eloquently voice the tragedy of a persecuted race. Elements of Hebrew music—oriental color, ritual trumpets, augmented-second intervals in the melody—are introduced into the music (sometimes self-consciously) to give it Hebraic authenticity. But the symphony is at its best when it is less concerned with speaking a correct Hebrew idiom and permits Bloch's inspiration to rise and soar without restraint.

## VIOLIN MUSIC

### *Baal Shem Suite*

Baal Shem (1700–1760) was a prophet who founded in Poland a sect known as Hasidism, based upon the principles of love, joy, and God. Baal Shem believed that everything in life has within itself something of God. Hence, to Baal Shem there was no evil that could not achieve redemption. Hence,

too, Baal Shem believed in pleasure, the good life, joy. He preached that man could serve God with body as well as mind. His sect indulged in feasts, dancing, and exciting music; his prayers were almost orgiastic. Baal Shem appealed profoundly to the lower classes, to the downtrodden and the humble, who regarded him as a saint. In preaching to his people, Baal utilized picturesque allegories and fables with which to cloak his lessons.

In his suite for violin and piano, Bloch presents three different pictures of Hasidic life. The first, entitled *Vidui* or Penitence, portrays the fervor with which the sinner returns to God. The second movement is an improvisation entitled *Nigun*, or Melody, reflecting the religious chanting of the true Hasid. The final part is named after one of the most joyous of Hebraic holidays, *Simchas Torah* (commemorative of the time when Moses handed down the Torah to the Children of Israel). It reproduces the abandon and hysteria with which the Hasid gave expression to religious joy. With a free use of rhythm, and of melodic intervals found in the Biblical incantations, Bloch wrote in this work Hebrew music that has deep racial roots.

Recommended recording: CM-X188 (Szigeti).

## BOÏELDIEU

FRANÇOIS ADRIEN BOÏELDIEU, composer of opéra comique, b. Rouen, 1775. Studied at the Paris Conservatory, where he later became professor. First coming into notice in 1800 with an opera *Zoraimé et Zulnare*, he maintained his popularity for many years. In 1817 he succeeded Méhul as a member of the Institut, and in 1825 he composed his masterpiece, *La Dame Blanche*. He died in Paris in 1834.

BOÏELDIEU belongs in that triumvirate of successful French composers of opéra comique that included Adam and Auber. He did not strive for the writing of a great or original art, but was motivated by his desire to please his public. In this, he was successful. As Mary Hargrave wrote: "His music, without great depth or originality, was melodious, graceful, tender, yet with sparkle and entrain; he was essentially a lyric composer, an embodiment of the genius of French light opera."

## OPERA

### *La Dame Blanche*

In three acts, libretto by Scribe, first presented at the Opéra-Comique in Paris on December 10, 1825.

*La Dame Blanche* was based upon two novels of Sir Walter Scott, *The Monastery* and *Guy Mannering*. *La Dame Blanche* (The White Lady) is a statue, regarded as the protecting spirit of the Avenel family. The Laird of Avenel, a Stuart, apparently out of grace after the battle of Culloden, has his steward Gaveston conceal the family treasure within the White Lady statue. Gaveston then tries to purchase the castle, and with it the statue. A mysterious stranger arrives—George Brown—who outbids Gaveston with the aid of Gaveston's ward, Anna (who often appears in disguise as the White Lady statue). With the castle and the jewels in George Brown's hands, and a furious Gaveston vowing revenge, it is learned that "Brown" is none other than the Laird of Avenel.

*La Dame Blanche* is one of the most famous of all French opéras comiques, and one of the most successful realizations of the style. "Boëldieu," wrote Brockway and Weinstock, "was not a profound musician, nor was he gifted with imagination in its highest reaches. For these he substituted in *La Dame Blanche* pleasing surfaces, a fancy buoyant and free, and a finely tempered and tireless wit. Moreover, *La Dame Blanche* is, without being windy or diffuse, borne forward through its three long acts with gusto—a musical ebullience that never flags."

*La Dame Blanche* won for its composer a handsome government pension, and became one of the most frequently performed of French light operas, enjoying some 1,500 presentations in about fifty years.

The most famous excerpts from this opéra comique are the tenor arias "Ah! quel plaisir d'être soldat!", "Déjà la nuit plus sombre," and "Viens, gentille dame"; and the concert piece in Act III based upon the ballad *Robin Adair*.

Recommended recording: Overture, C-P695599D (Paris Symphony—Ruhlmann).

## Boïto

ARRIGO BOÏTO, b. Padua, 1842. Studied at the Milan Conservatory. In 1861, a cantata won him an Italian government traveling scholarship. Upon his return to Italy, he engaged himself passionately in promoting a reform of Italian music which brought him many enemies. In 1912, he entered politics, being elected Senator. Boito earned additional fame in the operatic world through his librettos for Verdi's *Falstaff* and *Othello*, and Ponchielli's *La Gioconda*. He died in Milan in 1918.

Boïto was essentially the cerebral composer. In the music of his *Mefistofele*, for example, he tried to encompass within tones the philosophy and symbolism of Goethe. He wrote his best music in a polyphonic vein, and his style was instrumental in influencing Mascagni and Verdi.

## OPERA

*Mefistofele*

In a prologue, four acts, and epilogue, libretto by the composer, first performed at La Scala, Milan, on March 5, 1868.

Boïto was not only to preach about the mission of Italian music, but also to practice his preachings. In 1866, he began work on an opera which would test his theory—namely, that Italian operatic writing had become stilted and stereotyped and demanded radical renovation along dramatic lines. His labors were interrupted when, during the Austro-Italian conflict, he joined the ranks of the Garibaldian volunteers. When he removed his uniform, he returned to his opera with renewed industry. In 1868, it was accepted for performance by La Scala.

The world première of *Mefistofele*, under the baton of the composer, was surely one of the great fiascos in the history of operatic performances. Boïto's enemies had waited patiently for an occasion such as this. They swarmed into the opera house determined to repay the young man—blow for blow—for all the harsh criticism he had leveled against them. They hissed, booed, created scenes. They shouted their disapproval as the opera progressed. A riot ensued in which the members of the audience engaged in fist fights. The first performance ended in pandemonium. Similar demonstrations took place during the next two performances. Finally the police stepped in and, to insure peace, ordered the removal of the opera from the repertory.

The attack was directed against the composer. Yet it is certain that, even if the audience had been sympathetic to him, it would not have reacted much more kindly to the opera. Boïto had set out to reform Italian opera, and he did so courageously. This was no formal opera that was being presented at La Scala! The Italians of that period could hardly be expected to understand it at its first hearing, or to sympathize with it. Within an almost Gargantuan design, Boïto strove for such a marriage of drama and music as no Italian before him had attempted. Except in occasional passages, the opera was not pleasant to listen to. The music had power; it was novel in its severe melodic line, and its complex harmonic structure; the atmosphere was touched with mysticism. In place of singable melodies, there were pages and pages of polyphonic writing—adding only to the complexity of the work. Besides this, Boïto attempted in his music not only to describe the characters on the stage, but even to suggest their inmost thoughts and broodings. He tried to suggest Goethe's symbolism through tone. The result was a long and complex opera whose intricacy demanded careful study and analysis. On first hearing it must have appeared ponderous and dull, prolix and pretentious.

"It was a bewildering scheme of prodigious length," wrote H. C. Colles, "in which daring experiment and conventional operatic procedure jostled one another, and its immediate failure was inevitable, quite apart from the



conflict of prejudice in which it was received by the audience. Boïto lacked the first-rate creative musical power to enable him to weld together the divergent elements of music drama and to surmount all the difficulties which Wagner was presently to do in *Götterdämmerung*."

Eventually, Boïto revised the opera, reducing the five original acts to four, condensing the musical structure, and rewriting the role of Faust from baritone to tenor. These changes, and the lapse of eight years, worked in its favor. When it returned to the Italian stage, in Bologna in 1875, it proved successful. Audiences were now able to perceive, beneath its complicated texture, passages of genuine eloquence (as in the opening prelude, and in the prison scene), as well as to sense the power that stemmed from Boïto's blend of theater and music.

Whereas Gounod confined himself to the first part of Goethe's *Faust*, Boïto tried to incorporate within his opera the entire Goethe epic. In the prologue, a compact is made in Heaven involving Faust's soul. There follows a scene in Faust's study in which Faust signs his contract with Mefistofele. From the garden scene, in which Faust appears as Marguerite's beloved, the action passes on to the Witches' Sabbath on the heights of Brocken, then to the prison where Marguerite dies. Two scenes follow, incorporating material from the second part of Goethe's poem: the symbolization of the union of Greek and German ideals through the union of Helen and Faust, and the final redemption of Faust.

The most famous excerpts from *Mefistofele* include: the tenor aria "*Dai campi, dai prati*" from Act I; the Garden Scene in Act II; the soprano aria "*Altra notte in fondo al mare*," the duet for soprano and tenor "*Lontano, Lontano*," and Marguerite's Death from Act III; the "*La Notte del Sabba Classico*," of Act IV; the tenor aria "*Giunto sul passo estremo*" in the epilogue.

Recommended recording: C-Opera Set 17 (La Scala Soloists, Chorus, Orchestra—Molajoli).

## BORODIN

ALEXANDER BORODIN, b. St. Petersburg, 1833. He combined music study with academic, becoming assistant professor of chemistry at the Academy of Medical and Physical Sciences. In 1862 he met Balakirev and was impressed by the latter's nationalistic theories. Subscribing to Balakirev's musical principles, Borodin became one of the major spirits in the group known as the Russian Five (see Balakirev). He divided his life between the pursuits of chemistry and music, achieving note in each. He died in St. Petersburg in 1887.

A MEMBER of the Russian Five, Borodin was motivated by the ideal of writing native Russian music. "Like Glinka," wrote Stassov, "Borodin is an epic poet. He is not less national than Glinka, but with him the oriental element plays the part it plays with Dargomijsky, Balakirev, Mussorgsky, and

Rimsky-Korsakov." He was the first, as Alfred J. Swan pointed out, "who furrowed the musical soil of Western Europe with a Russian plough and embedded in it the seeds that were subsequently to blossom forth in a triumph of national Russian music that has few parallels in musical history."

## OPERA

### *Prince Igor*

In prologue and four acts, book by the composer and Vladimir Stassov, introduced at the St. Petersburg Opera on October 23, 1890.

Though Borodin first planned his folk opera *Prince Igor* as early as 1869, and though he worked on it for almost twenty years, he never finished it. Its completion was assigned to Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov. The first performance, in St. Petersburg, three years after Borodin's death, was highly successful, and *Prince Igor* has since taken its place among the great Russian operas.

For a long time, Borodin had been moved by the ambition to write a Russian folk opera. Toward the close of his life, this ambition assumed the proportions of an obsession. For his subject he decided on the epic of Prince Igor's army, and, to arrive at a greater authenticity, he devoted a great deal of painstaking research to his background material. "*Prince Igor*," Borodin himself explained, "is essentially a national opera which can be of interest only to us Russians who like to refresh ourselves at the fountainhead of our history, and to see the origins of our nationality revived upon the stage."

The opera concerns a Tartar race of Central Asia known as the Polovtzi, and the story tells of the capture of Prince Igor and his son by the Tartar Khan Konchak during the twelfth century. To this tale Borodin brought a musical style compounded of savagery, passion, and power.

The most famous part of the entire opera is "The Dances of the Polovtzhian Maidens," which have found a permanent place in our symphonic repertoire today. They occur during the second act. Prince Igor is held prisoner of war in a Polovtzhian camp, and in his honor the Khan arranges a series of wild dances characteristic of his tribe. In the opera, the dances are for orchestra and chorus, but the choral sections are usually omitted in their present-day performances on symphony programs.

Other famous sections in the opera are the bass aria "I Hate a Dreary Life" and the soprano arioso of Yaroslavna from Act I; and the tenor cavatina "Daylight is Fading," the baritone aria "No Sleep, No Rest," and the Dances, all from Act II.

Recommended recordings: Overture, V-9123 (Symphony Orchestra—Coates); "I Hate a Dreary Life," V-1237 (Chaliapin); Yaroslavna's arioso, V-9233 (Koshetz); the Dances of the Polovtzhian Maidens, choral version, CM-X54 (Leeds Festival Chorus; London Philharmonic—Beecham); Prelude to Act III, C-6941D (London Philharmonic—Beecham).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

*In the Steppes of Central Asia*

Borodin composed this famous symphonic sketch in 1880 for a *tableau vivant* which was presented in St. Petersburg to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the reign of Alexander II. Two contrasting themes provide the major material for the sketch, and they are developed freely. Borodin himself provided a program for this music which the composition follows with authenticity: "Through the silence of the steppes of Central Asia is heard the strain of a peaceful Russian song. Sounds of horses and camels come from the distance, approaching ever nearer, and with them the strains of a haunting eastern melody. A caravan is crossing the desert escorted by Russian soldiers. It progresses on its long journey confident in the protection afforded it by the soldiers. The caravan disappears into the distant horizon. The song of the Russians blends with that of the Orientals in a common harmony, until both fade away across the plains."

Recommended recording: V-11169 (London Symphony—Coates).

## QUARTET

*Quartet in D major*

Personally devoted to chamber music, Borodin was capable, when composing it, of eschewing the more pretentious mannerisms of his symphonic works and opera for a simpler, more intimate style. There is admirable lucidity in his writing for the four string instruments, and a fine lyric style, full of well-developed melodies, which makes the D major Quartet easy to hear and assimilate. The work is in four movements: Allegro moderato; Scherzo (which contains a reminiscence of a theme from the Polovtzhian Dances); a highly expressive and moody Notturmo—perhaps the peak of the entire quartet; and an Andante; Vivace.

Recommended recording: VM-252 (Pro Arte Quartet).

## SYMPHONY

*Symphony No. 2 in B minor*

During the composition of his Second Symphony, Borodin's thoughts were full of his opera *Prince Igor*, upon which he had been at work for many years. It was therefore inevitable that the symphony should assimilate some of the character of the opera, as well as some of its actual thematic material. Like *Prince Igor*, it is intensely national in spirit, and assumes some of the epic stature of the opera. Gerald Abraham goes so far as to suggest that "it is not impossible that this great symphony was the result of his despair at being unable to realise the 'Igor' of his dreams. Perhaps, in a sense it was the 'Igor' of his dreams."

The symphony was begun in 1871, but was not completed till five years later. Its first performance took place in St. Petersburg on March 10, 1877 under Napravnik. It was not successful, largely (according to Rimsky-Korsakov) because of its infelicitous scoring, with accentuation of the brasses. "Hearing this music," wrote Michail Ivanov, "you are reminded of the ancient Russian knights in all their awkwardness and also in all their greatness. There is heaviness even in the lyric and tender passages. These massive forms are at times tiresome; they crush the listener." The orchestration was revised a year later, and the work was again presented, this time under Rimsky-Korsakov's direction. Fame, however, was still distant, and when it did arrive, it arrived outside of Russia.

The symphony is in four movements: Allegro, Scherzo, Andante, and Allegro. The entire symphony has a suggestion of Tartar ferocity and is marked by a wild abandon of melodies and by oriental splendor of orchestration. "It owes its force," wrote Stassov, "to the maturity of the composers' talent, but especially to the national character with which it is impregnated by the program. The old heroic Russian form dominates it. . . . Borodin was haunted when he wrote this symphony by the picture of feudal Russia, and tried to paint it in his music."

Recommended recording: CM-528 (Minneapolis Symphony—Mitropoulos).

## BRAHMS

JOHANNES BRAHMS, b. Hamburg, 1833. Studied the piano with Edouard Marxsen, making his debut as pianist in his fourteenth year. In 1853, he toured with the Hungarian violinist Reményi, and in the same year he was discovered by Robert Schumann, who published an epoch-making article in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* proclaiming Brahms a genius. A lifelong friendship developed between Brahms and the Schumanns. After holding various posts, Brahms settled in Vienna in 1862. Here he remained for the rest of his life, conducting the Singakademie and the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, and composing. In 1881, he was given the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Breslau University, and in 1886 he was made knight of the Prussian Order and a member of the Berlin Academy of Arts. He died in Vienna in 1897.

**T**HOUGH Brahms is one of the last of the great Romanticists, he is essentially a classical composer. He was the son of a great era: Chopin, Schumann, Liszt, and Wagner were formulating a new music. But Brahms, temperamentally, belonged to an earlier period: he was of the age of the later Beethoven, and he aspired to carry the art of music from the point where Beethoven left off. Whether because of his musical scholarship, or whether his temperament led him in that direction, he looked rather to the past than

to the future. The first piano works he wrote were not romantic morsels in the vein of Schumann, but sonatas in the manner of the later Beethoven. His first orchestral works were not Lisztian tone poems, nor romantic symphonies pregnant with programmatic meaning, but serenades in the style of the eighteenth-century divertimenti. He had the eighteenth-century respect for form and structure; his music is consistently characterized by architectonic logic. It is this preoccupation with the past that earned for Brahms the contempt of some of the advanced guard in Vienna, to whom Wagner and Liszt were gods. "The leaders of the revolutionary movement in music after Beethoven (in which Schumann indeed expected a Messiah and thought he had found him—in Brahms) have passed by our symphonist without leaving a trace on him," wrote Hugo Wolf. "Brahms writes symphonies regardless of what has happened in the meantime." The perfect Wagnerites in Vienna could not understand how any composer could be touched by the Wagner tidal wave without being swept away; they failed to realize that Brahms had charted his own course, and that no new trend, however powerful, could divert him from that course.

The truth is that Brahms's art is marked by a dichotomy: his style is romantic, but his form is classic. It is this that has led Constant Lambert to say of him that "the creation of musical material and its subsequent treatment appear to be two separate mental processes." Yet there is no effect of contradiction in Brahms's music, no feeling that his material is presented in an inappropriate setting. In him, the Romanticist and the Classicist fused harmoniously to produce music that was *sui generis*.

His greatest admiration in music was Beethoven—in Brahms's eyes a paragon. "You have no conception of how the likes of us feel when we hear the tramp of a giant like Beethoven behind us," he once said. It was because Beethoven's gigantic shadow spread across his path that Brahms did not compose his first string quartet until he was forty, his first symphony until he was forty-three. But not even his adoration of Beethoven could stifle his creative impulses. Like Beethoven he wrote in every field of music (except the opera), and like Beethoven he strove for the fusion of a symphonic design with a musical style that was deeply poetic and movingly dramatic.

## CHORAL MUSIC

### *Alto Rhapsody*

The Rhapsody for alto solo, men's chorus, and orchestra, Op. 53, was composed in 1869, a period of despondency in Brahms's life. Having lost his beloved Julie Schumann to Count Marmonto, his bitterness found an echo in the somber poetry of Goethe's *Harzreise im Winter*. He set three of its stanzas to music, and they constitute the three sections of the work. I—"Aber abseits, wer ist's"; II—"Ach, wer heilet die Schmerzen dess, dem Balsam zu Gift ward"; III—"Ist auf deinem Psalter, Vater der Liebe." The first two sections

are for alto solo and orchestra; in the third section, a men's chorus—singing *mezza voce*—provides a poignant background to the flights of emotion by the alto.

"In this richly eloquent night-piece," wrote Robert Haven Schauffler, "Brahms makes us feel the wintry gloom of the mountains and of the young man's heart—at first objectively, then changing in the *Poco Andante* to sympathy for his plight. With soft harmonies on the horns, and the entry of the choir, the mode turns to major, and the alto raises her memorable chant of comfort and reassurance, 'But if from thy psalter'—one of the composers' most genuine inspirations. Despite the difficulty of comprehending this profound work in a few hearings, its pregnant expressiveness, its power of emotional delineation, and the benignant loveliness of the closing section ensure it a wider appreciation than it has yet received."

Recommended recording: VSP-13 (Marian Anderson; San Francisco Symphony—Monteux).

### *A German Requiem*

It would be more accurate to say that it was Robert Schumann's death than that it was the death of Brahms's mother that inspired Brahms to write this monumental choral work. For the first sketches were planned in 1861, four years before Brahms's mother died. Kalbeck considers that Brahms intended it as "a last great funeral rite for Schumann." However, there can be no question that his mother's death in 1865, which grieved him profoundly, was effective in inspiring the fifth part, which Brahms wrote expressly as a tribute to her.

*A German Requiem*, Op. 45, was completed in 1866, and on December 1 three movements were performed in Vienna. The reception was scandalous. There were hisses and loud vocal denunciations (who had ever heard of a Requiem set to German instead of Latin words?). However, when the work was given a complete performance in Bremen in 1868, it met with its due success.

Brahms's *Requiem* does not follow the accepted formula for this type of composition. It is a thoroughly Protestant work, utilizing a German text, not Latin; Brahms himself prepared it from the Lutheran Bible. Though it is, too, an outstandingly complex work, employing contrapuntal writing in all its variety, its complexity is secondary to its nobility and eloquence. Like Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, it is not religious reverence that we have here, but a personal utterance—in this case, of grief and solace. Death inspires in Brahms not religious humility but *Weltschmerz*, and, at last, consolation.

The feeling that Ernest Newman finds most predominant and moving in this music is that of consolation in grief and despair. "And such a consolation! A giant's tenderness all the more touching because of the strength we know to be behind it, a caress from a great hand that could crush us if it would. Perhaps there are no passages in the whole work more wonderful than these.

It is not the mere poetic scheme of contrasted black and white, shadow and sunlight that is so impressive. . . . It is the quality of the consoling music that follows such drastic, grisly paintings of the nothingness of man as 'All Flesh Doth Perish as the Grass,' and the 'Lord, Make Me to Know What the Measure of My Days May Be.' Yet grievous, terrible as these moods are, they are not the last, but only the first word with Brahms; for every hurt he has an anodyne. Could there be music more full of the purest spirit of consolation than that of the lovely choral snatches interspersed among the darker choruses or that of the chorus 'How Lovely Is Thy Dwelling Place' or that of the soprano aria 'Ye Who Now Sorrow'? . . . And when, having done both with grief and with consolation, Brahms turns to triumph over death, how deep-throated is his exultation! Where in music is there so cosmic a cry over death vanquished as at the end of the chorus 'Now Death is Swallowed Up with Victory' with its ineffable joy of combat? . . . But at the very end of the work the thinker comes uppermost again. Brahms closes in a chastened though hopeful mood . . . because the philosopher knows that our ultimate hope can only be not for triumph over life but for tranquillity in death."

The movements of the Requiem are as follows: I—"Blest Are They That Mourn"; II—"Behold All Flesh"; III—"Make Me to Know"; IV—"How Lovely Is Thy Dwelling Place"; V—"Ye That Now Are Sorrowful"; VI—"Here on Earth"; VII—"Blessed Are the Dead."

Recommended recording: "Ye That Now Are Sorrowful," V-9395 (Austral; Royal Opera Chorus and Orchestra—Barbirolli).

### *Song of Fate*

Brahms's friend Dietrich has told us about the origin of Brahms's masterpiece for chorus and orchestra, the *Schicksalslied*, Op. 54. "In the summer [of 1871] Brahms came [to Bremen] to make a few excursions in the neighborhood with us and the Reinthalers. One morning we went together to Wilhelmshaven, for Brahms was interested in seeing the magnificent naval port. On the way there our friend, who was usually so lively, was quiet and grave. He described how early that morning, he had found Hölderlin's poems in the bookcase and had been deeply impressed by the *Schicksalslied*. Later on, after spending a long time walking round and visiting all the points of interest, we were sitting resting by the sea, when we discovered Brahms a long way off sitting by himself on the shore writing. It was the first sketch for the *Schicksalslied*, which appeared fairly soon afterwards. A lovely excursion which we had arranged to the Urwald was never carried out. He hurried back to Hamburg in order to give himself up to his work."

This work, often called the "Little Requiem," is suffused with a quiet and dignified sorrow, expressive of Hölderlin's pessimistic poetry, Brahms contemplated the uncertainty of life and compared it with the serenity of the heavenly state. In this music, he is moved to a gray and somber mood. But

the pessimism does not remain permanent. To the Hölderlin poem, Brahms attached an extended closing orchestral section of rare beauty. He has found peace and solace; he has triumphed over destiny.

Many consider this the greatest of Brahms's choral works; certainly it is one of the most affecting.

Recommended recording: C-X 223 (New York Philharmonic—Walter; Westminster Choir).

## CONCERTOS

### Piano Concertos

It is significant that Brahms originally planned his first piano concerto (D minor) as a symphony; for it has often been said of Brahms's concertos that they are symphonies with instrumental obbligato. The symphonic proportions which Brahms so admired in Beethoven he achieved in his own right whenever he wrote for orchestra. And this is true of his concertos. So concerned is he with the orchestral texture that, at times, he writes ungratefully for the solo instrument. But if in his concertos, we sometimes miss brilliant writing for the solo instrument, we are more than compensated by the depth and poetic beauty of the music.

#### *Concerto No. 1 in D minor*

Brahms subjected his first concerto to considerable revision and change before it emerged in its final form. As has been said, it was originally intended as a symphony. Possibly terrified at the thought of venturing into Beethoven's world, Brahms soon abandoned the project and revamped the thematic material into a sonata for two pianos. But the material seemed overrich in texture for two unaccompanied pianos, and eventually he compromised between the two projects: he decided to create a concerto for piano and orchestra. In a letter to Clara Schumann he explained that the idea first came to him in a dream, soon after he began to work on the projected symphony. In this dream, he said, "I used my luckless symphony to make a piano concerto and was playing this. Made up of the first movement of the scherzo, with a finale—terribly difficult and grand. I was quite carried away." He re-adapted the first two movements of the two-piano sonata and wrote a new third movement. (The third movement of the two-piano sonata later became the "Behold all Flesh" section of the *German Requiem*).

The first movement (Maestoso) plunges at once into the speech of high tragedy; here is one of Brahms's most virile and dramatic themes. The entire movement is marked by conflicts and passions in which the dynamic opening subject is contrasted with an elegiac subject for the violins. Hearing this moving music we can understand the generally accepted belief that it expressed Brahms's inner turmoil in learning that his dear friend Schumann had attempted suicide. Probably, Brahms's sorrow over this persisted through the writing of the second movement, for its Adagio is music of tender pathos. "*Benedictus qui venit in nomine Dei*," he wrote at the beginning of the



movement. Two beautiful subjects (one for muted strings at the beginning of the movement, the second for clarinets) constitute the material, which is developed with deep feeling. The closing Rondo movement pulses with an animal spiritedness, but after the piano cadenza a feeling of contemplative beauty returns.

The concerto, Op. 15, was completed in or about 1856, and was first performed in Hanover on January 22, 1859, with Joachim as conductor and Brahms as soloist. The performance was a failure. And a few days later, when the work was repeated in Leipzig (this time with Julius Rietz as conductor) it had an even more hostile reception. Brahms wrote to Joachim about the Leipzig concert: "The first rehearsal excited no kind of feeling either in the performance or the audience; no audience came at all to the second, and no performer moved a muscle of his face. In the evening, the first and second movements were listened to without the slightest display of feeling. At the conclusion three pairs of hands were brought together very slowly, whereupon a perfectly distinct hissing from all sides forbade any such demonstration. . . . The failure has made no impression upon me whatever. After all, I am only experimenting and feeling my way. But the hissing was too much."

"I am only experimenting and feeling my way. . . ." With characteristic modesty Brahms was once again understating his contribution. The concerto is a masterpiece, amazing for the completeness of its conception and maturity of its speech—particularly amazing when we recall that he composed it in his twenty-sixth year, and that it represented his first ambitious use of the symphony orchestra. Certainly it takes a giant stride ahead of the *Serenades* which preceded it, a stride that brought Brahms for the first time within reach of the full exploitation of his unique creative powers.

Recommended recording: VM-677 (Schnabel; London Philharmonic—Szell).

### ***Concerto No. 2 in B flat***

The first Piano Concerto was the work of an impetuous young man driven by the storms and fevers of his youth. The second, Op. 83, written more than twenty years later, is the ripe and mellow speech of the mature man who is given less to defiant action and rebellion and more to reflection. It is illuminating to learn that this second concerto was first sketched during Brahms's first trip to Italy in 1878, and was developed during a second Italian trip in 1881. The Italian sun, the beauty of the Italian countryside, is found in this work; these, and the gentle beauty of the "Italian spring turning to summer."

The opening subject of the concerto suggests a tranquillity which is in sharp contrast to the demoniac passion of the opening of the First Piano Concerto. That tranquil beauty suffuses the opening movement, even though there are occasional fiery passages, particularly for the piano. In the second movement, an *Allegro appassionata*, a somewhat cogent first subject pronounced by the piano is followed by a contrasting melody for strings of

rare sweetness (marked *tranquillo e dolce*). The third movement is one of the greatest of Brahms's creations, and one of the noblest pages in Romantic music. A 'cello solo opens the movement with a melody of surpassing beauty, gentle and reflective—a melody that Brahms also used as the basis for his exquisite song *Immer leiser*. It speaks of other worlds, far removed from the fever and fret of everyday existence. In the last movement, *Allegretto grazioso*, we have several gypsy melodies, now light-hearted as youth itself, now suffused with romantic ardor, now wildly abandoned.

Completed in 1881, the concerto was first introduced in Budapest with Brahms as soloist. In discussing the concerto, Brahms described it to a friend as a "tiny, tiny piano concerto, with a tiny, tiny wisp of a scherzo." Brahms, of course, was there being whimsical rather than modest. This "tiny, tiny concerto" is Titanic in size, scope, and conception; in stature, there is nothing quite like it in the entire realm of piano literature.

Recommended recording: VM-740 (Horowitz; NBC Symphony Orchestra—Toscanini).

### Violin Concertos

#### *Concerto in D major*

The Violin Concerto, Op. 77, preceded the second Piano Concerto by three years, and is the fruit of Brahms's maturity as a composer. Though it was composed with Joachim's advice and criticism (much of which, incidentally, Brahms rejected), it is not always written gracefully for the violin. (Who was it that once said that Brahms wrote a concerto not *for* the violin but *against* it?) Brahms was much more concerned with the symphonic texture than with the niceties of writing music that should suit the violin naturally. And his material in the first and last movements was too savage to be perfectly adapted to the lyric temperament of the violin. But the work is magnificent in its strength and originality and abounds in Brahms's profoundest thoughts. In comparison with a well-manicured concerto like that of Mendelssohn, it is undisciplined with a fiery spirit of independence. But it is an integrated masterpiece that brought to the violin-concerto form a richness it had not known since Beethoven.

The first movement opens with a song-like subject for bassoons, violas, 'cellos, and horns which seems to promise a peaceful and subdued atmosphere. But the storm soon breaks out in the orchestra, and the entire movement is charged with electricity. An exquisite subject for oboe, pastoral in character, opens the second movement (Adagio), which has a beauty suggestive of an autumnal evening. The last movement, *Allegro giocoso*, is fiery with Hungarian melodies and rhythms.

The first performance of the concerto, with Joachim as soloist and the composer as conductor, took place in Leipzig on January 1, 1879. "Joachim played with a love and devotion that brought home to us in every bar the direct or indirect share he has had in the work," wrote a member of that first

audience. "As to the reception, the first movement was too new to be distinctly appreciated by the audience, the second made considerable way, and the last aroused great enthusiasm."

Recommended recording: VM-581 (Heifetz; Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

### Concerto for Violin and Violoncello

#### *Double Concerto in A minor*

The Double Concerto for violin, violoncello, and orchestra, Op. 102, was Brahms's last venture in the concerto form. It was a modern adaptation of the old concerto grosso form, in which the solo instruments are used as a contrast to the orchestra, and are combined with it in *tutti*. Brahms spoke of it from the first rather disparagingly as a "strange notion." If it is a less complete and integrated masterpiece than the Second Piano Concerto or the Violin Concerto, it is nevertheless not without moments of poetry. It overflows with melodies characteristically Brahmsian in their union of strength and sweetness. A vigorous four-bar orchestral prelude introduces the two solo instruments unaccompanied in a brief interlude, following which comes an extended orchestral introduction with the statement of the principal material of the movement. Though Brahms has said that the task of writing a double concerto should be left to "someone else who understands fiddles better than I," his writing for the two instruments is generally adept, and the principal themes of the first movement pass from one solo instrument to the other with remarkable resilience, to be then taken up by the orchestra. The Andante finds Brahms again in one of his favorite meditative poses: two principal subjects—the first announced by horns and wood winds (to be repeated by the two solo instruments) and the second by the wood winds—are like the philosophic musings of a mature man recalling the hours of peace and serenity he has known. The last movement, Vivace non troppo, is gay and carefree, reminiscent of a Viennese peasant dance.

The concerto, composed in 1887, was first performed privately at Baden-Baden for a group of Clara Schumann's friends. Its public performance took place in Cologne on October 18, 1887. It was received coldly, and this frigid reception may have been at least partially responsible for Brahms's permanent abandonment of the concerto form.

Recommended recording: VM-815 (Heifetz; Feuermann; Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy).

### ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

(For Symphonies, see Symphonies).

#### *Academic Festival Overture*

In 1879, Brahms was given the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by the University of Breslau. As an expression of gratitude, he wrote a work in the spirit of the occasion, utilizing well-known German student songs, some of them

very old. After a brief introductory section for strings, of brisk pace, the wood winds chant *Wir hatten gebauet ein stattliches Haus*. A short development follows leading to the second of the student songs, *Der Landesvater* (second violins). Still another development introduces a third song, *Fuchs Lied* (two bassoons). The overture comes to a rousing finish with full orchestra intoning the most famous of all student songs, *Gaudeamus Igitur*.

Brahms composed the overture in the summer of 1880, during a vacation at Ischl. It was first performed at Breslau in 1881 under his own direction. Brahms's own description of the overture was "a very jolly potpourri on students' songs *à la Suppé*."

Recommended recording: CM-X200 (New York Philharmonic—Barbirolli).

### *Tragic Overture*

The *Tragic Overture*, Op. 81, was composed simultaneously with the *Academic Festival*—at Ischl in the summer of 1880. It is not known whether Brahms had any special tragedy in mind when he wrote his overture, but it has a Greek nobility and spaciousness. It is one of Brahms's most moving works, in which the pathos is expressed with majesty, and in which the tragedy has the character of inevitability. As Hermann Dieters wrote: "In this work we see a strong hero battling with an iron and relentless fate; passing hopes of victory cannot alter an impending destiny. We do not care to inquire whether the composer had a special tragedy in his mind, or, if so, which one; those who remain musically unconvinced by the surpassing powerful theme, would not be assisted by a particular suggestion." Two major themes dominate the work, the one reflective of a great and brooding sorrow, the other providing an antidote of optimism. The development of both themes is along epic lines, and its dramatic power is strongly reminiscent of the Beethoven of the *Coriolanus Overture*.

Recommended recording: V-15386-7 (NBC Symphony—Toscanini).

### *Variations on a Theme of Haydn*

This was Brahms's first ambitious work exclusively for symphony orchestra, and it was the one that convinced him that he was ripe for a major symphonic assignment. The *Variations*, Op. 56a, was composed in 1873 (three years before the First Symphony). In 1870, Pohl showed Brahms some Haydn pieces, among them the *Chorale Sancti Antoni* which Haydn had utilized in his *Divertimento* in B-flat major. It was this theme that Brahms appropriated for his remarkable set of symphonic variations. The theme is voiced by the winds, following which come eight variations in which the theme is only passingly suggested, sometimes disguised with such contrapuntal and rhythmic skill that it requires a great deal of intimacy to recognize it. But it is particularly interesting to study the wide and flexible range of mood and feeling with which Brahms varies his original theme. His imagination is stirred now to the production of fluent, supple, graceful music (Variation 1,

Poco piu andante), now sensuous music (Variation 2, Piu vivace), now music that is graceful and delicate (Variation 6, Vivace), now of a poignant beauty (Variation 8, Grazioso). All the resource of Brahms's technical skill in melodic writing are here utilized wondrously. The work ends with the restatement of the original theme in a dramatic climax.

These variations exist also in a two-piano arrangement made by Brahms (Op. 56b) which Brahms frequently played with Clara Schumann and which are popular at concerts of two-piano music. It is not definitely known, though it is often suspected, that the orchestral version preceded the two-piano one.

Recommended recordings: orchestral version, VM-355 (New York Philharmonic—Toscanini); piano version, CM-X181 (Bartlett and Robertson).

## PIANO MUSIC

James Gibbons Huneker wrote as follows concerning Brahms's piano music: "Brahms has an individual voice. . . . His Spartan simplicity sometimes unmask the illusory and elusive qualities of the instrument. . . . His techniques are peculiar, but they make the keyboard sound beautifully. . . . His piano music is gay, is marmoreal in its repose, is humorous, jolly, sad, depressing, morbid, recondite, poetic, severe, and fantastic. He pours into the elastic form of the sonata romantic passion, and in the loosest texture of his little pieces he can be as immovable as bronze, as plastic as clay. But even in the more invertebrate pieces—if Brahms could ever construct without a vertebra—there is a sense of form, a pattern weaving. . . . He is sometimes frozen by grief and submerged by the profundity of his thought, but he is ever interesting. . . . Above all else, he is deeply human."

### *Ballades*

Brahms composed a set of four ballades, Op. 10, and a fifth he incorporated into his Op. 118 volume of piano pieces. Of the Op. 10 set, William Murdoch wrote: "They are masterly in conception and workmanship, and are full of fine thoughts, deep feeling, and exquisite colors." The first in D minor (Andante) interprets the Scottish ballad "Edward," and carries over some of the gloom and the dramatic conflicts of that famous poem. Schumann spoke of this piece as "wonderful, quite new. . . . The close is beautiful and original." The second Ballade in D major (Andante) is more tender than gloomy, and has an almost feminine gentleness. The third in B minor (Allegro) brushes aside both gloom and gentility, and is energetic in its pace and fiery in its spirit. The fourth in B major (Andante con moto) has a story-book character that reminds Murdoch of "German romance and sentiment." The G minor Ballade, Op. 118 (Allegro energico), is a moving dramatic story with powerful surges and sweeping climactic moments.

Recommended recordings: Ballade in D minor, Op. 10, No. 1, "Edward," Ballade in D major, Op. 10, No. 2, and Ballade in G minor, Op. 118, No. 3, V-118622 (Rubinstein).

### *Capriccios*

Brahms's *Capriccios* are often fanciful and whimsical, revealing the lighter and more jovial facet of the composer's personality. There are four in Op. 76, and three in Op. 116. In the Op. 76 the most famous are the B minor (*Allegretto ma non troppo*), a delicate, light-hearted, witty, and graceful morsel; the C-sharp minor (*Agitato, ma non troppo*) and the C major (*Grazioso ed un poco vivace*) both restless, energetic, and full of headstrong spirit. The three in Op. 116 are all masterpieces: the D minor (*Presto energico*) is rhythmically compelling, magnetic in its irrepressible movement; the G minor (*Allegro passionata*) is a youthful expression of buoyant good feelings; the D minor (*Allegro agitato*) alternates between lyrical beauty and dramatic power.

Recommended recordings: B minor, Op. 76, No. 2; C major, Op. 76, No. 8; D minor, Op. 116, No. 1, VM-202 (Bachaus).

### *Hungarian Dances*

Brahms was first introduced to the gypsy music of the Hungarians while he was still young. Reményi brought him into contact with it, and from the first its spell bewitched him. Throughout his life, Brahms loved nothing better than to listen to gypsy music as played by a good Hungarian orchestra. And until the end of his life, the Hungarian idiom influenced him greatly, as many of the last movements of his larger works attest. Brahms issued the first two volumes of *Hungarian Dances* as duets in 1869, and as solos in 1872; the third and fourth volumes he issued as duets in 1880. They were extraordinarily popular, although they were also instrumental in bringing upon Brahms from some quarters the accusation that he was a plagiarist. The accusation was, of course, an absurd one. Brahms made no effort to conceal the fact that his *Dances* appropriated famous Hungarian folk melodies; while, as a matter of fact, his extraordinarily original treatment and his rich harmonic vocabulary entitle him to be considered rather as the composer of the pieces than their editor or adaptor. In these dances, Brahms's piano style harmonizes well with the gay and abandoned (or sentimental) spirit of gypsy music. Brahms himself orchestrated three of these Hungarian dances: Nos. 1, 3, 10.

Recommended recordings: Hungarian Dance No. 1, V01675 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski); No. 4, arranged for violin and piano, V-14905 (Menuhin); No. 5, arranged for orchestra, V-4321 (Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler); No. 6, arranged for orchestra, V-4321 (Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler); No. 17, arranged for violin and piano, C-DX785 (Zimbalist); Nos. 18, 19, 20, 21, arranged for orchestra, V-1796 (Minneapolis Symphony—Ormandy).

### *Intermezzi*

The *Intermezzi* are frequently contemplative, elegiac, deeply personal expressions. Brahms included four in Op. 76, four in Op. 116, four in Op. 118, three in Op. 119, and published three of them separately as Op. 117.

The A-minor *Intermezzo*, in Op. 116 (*Andante*) is delicate, subtle, with

elusive charms. The E major in Op. 116 (*Andantino teneramente*), was singled out by Huneker as one of the greatest single pieces by Brahms: "In the entire range of piano literature I cannot recall a more individual and more beautiful piece of music." The three *Intermezzi* grouped as Op. 117 are all remarkable. The first, in E-flat major (*Andante moderato*), is an exquisite cradle song inspired by an old Scotch ballad, *Lady Anne Bothwell's Lament*. No. 2 in B-flat minor (*Andante con troppo e con molto espressione*) combines restlessness with melancholy. No. 3 in C-sharp minor (*Andante con moto*) has a dramatic atmosphere of awe and mystery. In Op. 118 we have the beautiful E-flat minor *Intermezzo*, suffused with poetic sorrow, the poignancy of an aching heart. The three *Intermezzi* in Op. 119 are also significant. "Brahms filled No. 1 subtly full of Schumann's style and spirit," wrote Schauffler; "but Clara, for whom it was composed, disappointed him by failing to grasp his recondite and delicate musical allusions. The E minor *Andantino* (No. 2), a thing of tremulous and sensitive melancholy, turns its minor plaint, at *grazioso*, into one of the most convincing love songs ever entrusted to the piano. The C major *Intermezzo* (No. 3) is blithe as a school of dolphins, using the sunlit surface of a choppy, mid-ocean sea as their flying trapeze."

Recommended recordings: Five *Intermezzi*, (A-flat, Op. 76, No. 3; B-flat, Op. 76, No. 2; E major, Op. 116, No. 4; E-flat minor, Op. 118, No. 6, E minor, Op. 119, No. 2) CM-201 (Giesecking); A-minor, Op. 76, No. 7, V-118140 (Rubinstein); A minor, Op. 116, No. 2, V-14516 (Bachaus); E-flat major, Op. 117, No. 1, and B-flat minor, Op. 117, No. 2, V-118138 (Rubinstein); A minor, Op. 118, No. 1, V-7994 (Bachaus); A major, Op. 118, No. 2, V-118139 (Rubinstein); F minor, Op. 118, No. 4, V-7992 (Bachaus); B minor, Op. 119, No. 1, V-14134 (Bachaus); C major, Op. 119, No. 3, V-118140 (Rubinstein).

### Rhapsodies

The two Rhapsodies in Op. 79, the B minor (*Agitato*) and G minor (*Molto appassionato, ma non troppo Allegro*), are among Brahms's greatest works for the piano. Passionate utterances, they have a power and strength of Brahms's most heroic pages. According to Billroth, "there is more of the young heaven-storming Johannes in both these pieces than in the last works of the mature man." "Here," wrote Ernst, "Brahms won for the instrument new colors: the ghostly demoniac place in the middle part of the G minor Rhapsody, swathed as it were in mist, has no equal in the entire literature." The Rhapsody in E-flat major, Op. 119 (*Allegro risoluto*), is Brahms's last work for the piano. "There is a challenge of defiance in it," wrote Murdoch, "as if he wished to prove to the world that his indomitable spirit was not in the least impaired, that his youthful vigor was as intense as ever, that he could write just as powerfully for the instrument as in the days of the F minor Sonata, though with a shade more affection. It possesses no feeling of hatred, no bitterness, no savagery—pride is stamped all over its pages."

Recommended recording: CM-X183 (Petri).

*Sonata in F minor* (See Sonata: Piano)*Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Handel*

While the *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Handel*, Op. 24, is an early work—it was composed in 1861—it is an unquestioned Brahms masterpiece. Brahms takes a theme from Handel's *Petite Suite* in B flat and develops it into a series of monumental variations including a cathedral-like fugue which recreates something of Handel's own breadth of style. William Murdoch calls this "one of the finest works in the whole realm of writings for the pianoforte. The theme . . . is simple, hale, and hearty with most elementary harmonic progressions, but what Brahms has done with this straightforward tune is almost beyond comprehension. New technical inventions abound; changes of fancy, mood and rhythm. Every page teems with original ideas, yet all these devices are logically produced."

Recommended recording: CM-345 (Petri).

*Waltzes*

Brahms composed sixteen waltzes, Op. 39, originally for four hands, but later transcribed by him for two. The waltzes find the "austere" and "self-contained" Brahms typically Viennese in his love of life and in the lightness of his touch. This music is buoyant, carefree, irrepressible in the best Straussian traditions. As Hanslick wrote: "What bewitching lovely strains! Naturally, nobody would look for real dance music, but for waltz melodies and rhythms handled in free artistic form and, as it were, ennobled by their dignified expression. . . . The waltzes . . . make no sort of pretension to size; they are all short and have neither introduction nor finale. The character of the individual dances sometimes approximates to the lilting Viennese waltz, but oftener to the easy-swaying Ländler, and through them we hear, as it were, a distant echo of Schubert."

The fifteenth waltz in A-flat major is one of the most famous of all Brahms's works, well known in its original piano version as well as in the celebrated transcription for violin and piano made by David Hochstein.

Recommended recording: piano solo, VM-321 (Bachaus).

**QUARTETS**

In his chamber music, Brahms achieved his most personal expression. As Herbert Antcliffe wrote: "Brahms . . . was happier by far in this than in any other mode of composition. Great as is his symphonic music, truthful and dramatic though his choral works, sensuous and brilliant his piano pieces, none appeals to our finer feelings so forcibly and effectively as the concerted chamber works. In these he meets and discourses with his friends. Perfect in



their workmanship, they never smell of the lamp or wear the scholar's gown. They are the intimate thought of a man spoken only to his friends. . . . They will always be the musician's music."

### String Quartets

*Quartet in C minor*

*Quartet in A minor*

*Quartet in B-flat*

It took Brahms sixteen years to bring the first sketches of his C minor string quartet, Op. 51, No. 1, to their final resolution. The long delay may perhaps be explained by his reluctance to enter upon a branch of composition already brought to such magnificent artistic fulfillment. To Brahms, who venerated the last string quartets of Beethoven, the string quartet must have appeared like holy ground upon which to trespass would have been sacrilege. Another and even more forceful reason may be that Brahms inevitably thought in terms of symphonic music: his ideas were expansive, his vocabulary rich, his forms spacious. He could write—indeed by this time he had written—chamber works that included the piano, for the piano could give voice to his larger ideas. But with strings alone he seemed lost. It took many years of experiment and self-analysis to reduce the proportions of his material to the fastidiously limited requirements of the string quartet and to achieve the transparency of writing, the intimacy of tone, and the crystallization of speech that the string quartet demands. As Brahms himself said of his string-quartet efforts: "It is not hard to compose, but what is fabulously hard is to leave the superfluous notes under the table." Only after Brahms had composed trios, sonatas, sextets, piano quartets, and the famous piano quintet did he arrive at the necessary self-assurance and the refinement of style to tackle the four string instruments alone.

Certainly, if Brahms had any misgivings as to his ability to write a string quartet, they are not to be detected in the two works of Opus 51 and that of Opus 67. Purer and more felicitous writing for the four stringed instruments is not to be found anywhere else in chamber-music literature. And though Brahms's means of expression here is highly economical, no restriction on his musical ideas appears.

Daniel Gregory Mason points out that a single idea dominates the entire C minor quartet, Op. 51, No. 1 (except for the Allegretto movement): "a rising motive suggesting indomitable will . . . set in opposition with a falling one of tenderest sensibility." This "idea" is found in three of the four movements. "The melodic style is striking for its simplicity, and for its resulting universality."

Mason finds in the first movement a "drama of will overpowering all the protests of the suffering soul—a struggle that recalls Schopenhauer's tragic sense of restlessness, and at the same time the insatiability of the will." In the

second movement, Poco adagio, the assertive theme of the first movement "by one of those magical changes of which only music is capable, takes on a new warmth, even sensitiveness, without losing its strength." In the Allegretto molto moderato, "the composer momentarily relaxes tension by playing with a hypnotically insistent meter against which rhythmic figures flit with the irresponsibility of dreams." The Finale embodies "final enunciation of the note of insatiable will."

The A minor Quartet, Op. 51, No. 2, is characterized by Mason as music of "easy charm" and "Viennese *Gemütlichkeit*." Less austere in its form and musical content than the C minor, it is pervaded by a feeling of remarkable ease and spontaneity. The quartet opens somewhat elegiacally—an opening that sets the mood for the entire movement, which is throughout touched with a most tender expressiveness. The second movement is of Brahmsian nobility, an exalted utterance of high-minded thinking. The third movement, a minuet, alternates between magical lightness of movement and charming lyricism. The last movement is characterized by Hungarian restlessness and vigor.

The B-flat Quartet, Op. 67, is more virile than the earlier two; its most striking trait is its engaging good humor and healthy spirits. The opening movement, Vivace, is introduced by a theme suggestive of a hunting fanfare—a theme developed throughout the movement energetically and spiritedly; the second theme is whimsical in character and helps to preserve a unity of expression throughout the movement. A lyric second movement is expounded with rich harmonic writing. The third movement, Agitato, is capricious in manner; while the last movement, Poco Allegretto, is a set of eight variations on a gay little theme.

Recommended recordings: C minor, VM-227 (Busch Quartet); A minor, VM-278 (Budapest Quartet).

### Piano Quartets

*Quartet in G minor*

*Quartet in A major*

*Quartet in C minor*

Brahms settled in Vienna in 1862, and shortly afterwards made his formal début there as composer with a performance of his G minor Quartet for piano and strings. The performing ensemble was the Hellmesberger Quartet. Hellmesberger, when he saw the manuscript of this work, announced simply, "This is Beethoven's heir." But Vienna in general did not take too kindly to the new work, remaining untouched by the proud affirmation of the piano writing and by the profound emotion of the soaring strings. The heroic outlines of the form it mistook for pretentiousness; the sensitive musing of the slow movement, for ponderous gloom. One critic described the music as "gloomy, obscure, and ill-developed," and spoke of the last movement—fiery gypsy music—as an "offense against the laws of style. There is

neither precedent nor excuse for introducing into chamber music a movement conceived throughout in the style of a folk dance."

Kilburn, in his analysis of this piano quartet, finds that the andante movement "contains some of its author's noblest thoughts, expressed with the utmost clarity."

Discussing the other two piano quartets, Kilburn wrote: "In the commencement of the other [A major] we have a fine example of poetic expression, yet at the close the same material is worked out in a contrapuntal manner which is quite remarkable." The slow movement of this quartet is spoken of by J. A. Fuller-Maitland as an example of "exquisite tone color." "The Piano Quartet in C minor," wrote Kilburn, "does not show the same high qualities as the other two, and is indeed somewhat lacking in spontaneity. The second entry of the strings in the opening movement has a chromatic passage which is more like Spohr than Brahms, nor is the chorale which appears in the last movement at all in his usual style."

Recommended recordings: G minor, VM-234 (Pro-Arte Quartet; Rubinstein); A major, VM-346 (Busch Quartet; Serkin).

## QUINTETS

### Clarinet Quintet

#### *Quintet in B minor*

Brahms's Quintet for clarinet and strings, Op. 115, was composed in the last years of the composer's life and has the autumnal mellowness which comes with introspection. Deiters comments that in this work "we enter into Brahms's feelings as he looks back musingly over a life rich in powerful creative work, artistic successes, devotion, and love, and steers his ship of life on its further course not without a feeling of grief at all that is no more." For such sober musings, Brahms aptly chose the clarinet to supplement the string quartet—the gentle-voiced, occasionally somber, occasionally mellow clarinet capable of voicing both grief and resignation with such felicitous accents. The entire work is singularly melodic—a gentle and lovable melody that does not soar in passionate flights but is tender and reflective. The first movement is suffused with accents of resignation. The second movement is an unforgettable song with a poignant middle section (*Piu lento*). The third movement provides the only excursion into a subdued kind of gaiety; while the last movement is a series of wonderful variations on a broadly articulated theme seeming to convey every shade and suggestion of restrained grief.

The Quintet was introduced on December 12, 1891, in Berlin, by the Joachim Quartet with Mühlfeld as clarinetist. Kalbeck points out that this was the first time that the Joachim Quartet had an assisting artist other than a string player—adding that it was on this occasion that the Joachim Quartet lost its virginity.

Recommended recording: VM-491 (Busch Quartet; Kell).

## Piano Quintet

*Quintet in F minor*

Though this is a comparatively early work of Brahms (Op. 34), it is one of his most famous chamber works—and deservedly so. Its elusive and subtle beauties are not easily grasped, and it was some time before its greatness was fully appreciated. It is profuse with thematic material, developed with consummate mastery, and it abounds in subtleties of expression which require intimacy for full appreciation.

It was some time before Brahms arrived at the quintet medium for his ideas. Originally he planned this work as a string quartet with extra 'cello. Then, feeling some profound lack (probably the strings alone were inadequate to voice such capacious ideas), he recast it as a sonata for two pianos. This, in turn, he rejected as unsatisfactory—largely owing to Clara Schumann's advice and criticism. Finally, he arrived at the proper combination of instruments for his music: a string quartet supplemented by a piano.

It has a lively first movement in which a number of themes, often contrasting sharply in mood, are imaginatively yet concisely elaborated. As an indication of the unity and coherence of this quintet, it is instructive to note that the first movement presents five highly expressive themes in only 300 bars. A tender and affecting second movement is followed by a scherzo whose dazzling changes from major to minor key, from 6/8 to 2/4 time, from shadowy, gliding motion to powerful, joyous rhythms, recreates the emotional richness of the first movement.

Several writers have voiced their wonder at the amazing "sigh of liberation" at the opening of the Trio. It is highly characteristic of Brahms. The quintet has form in the best manner of Beethoven. But like the later and most significant works of that master, Opus 34 is a good illustration of Brahms's ability to relinquish schematic form in favor of creating the form best adapted to his thought and feeling.

Recommended recording: VM-607 (Busch Quartet; Serkin).

## String Quintets

*Quintet in F major*

It was 1882 and spring when Brahms wrote his String Quintet in F major, Opus 88, and the whole work is filled with the spirit of spring.

It is ardently romantic in Brahms's gentlest vein (reminding us strongly of the Italianate qualities of the Second Symphony which preceded it).

Carefree and amiable, the first movement shows the same formal excellence as the introductory movement of the C major Trio.

In the second movement, marked *grave ed appassionata*, we find the identifying traits of an *adagio* and *scherzo* merged into an organic movement which serves as a *ritornelle*, whose chief theme Brahms took from an earlier work.

For a finale Brahms chose to combine the fugue and sonata form which had been favored by the classical composers. And writing in this style he expresses himself buoyantly.

Recommended recording: VM-466 (Budapest Quartet; Hobday).

### *Quintet in G major*

Brahms's other quintet, G major, Opus 111, composed in the summer of 1890, is the work of a different mood—gay with a masculine strength; intense and disturbing in its complexity and elaboration.

It is full of Austrian gaiety achieved, in part, through the use of Viennese themes which also help to induce an idyllic mood. And it is this mood which forbids too strong an accentuation. Consequently, we find that many of this Quintet's purely intellectual variations are treated with the almost fantastic freedom frequent in Brahms.

There is not much of a suggestion of repose in this lyrical flight although the second movement, a romance almost bucolic in nature, is in Brahms's most felicitous vein. This is cogent rhythmic music, full of dash and color and fiery spirit.

Recommended recording: VM-184 (Budapest Quartet; Mahlke).

## SEXTETS

### *String Sextet in B-flat, "Spring"*

This Sextet, Op. 18, has well earned its sobriquet. It breathes throughout the fragrance of springtime, and exudes the exhilaration of a world reborn into youthfulness. The last two movements—Scherzo and Rondo—are in Brahms's most exuberant and jovial vein. Brahms, typical Viennese of the coffee-house, had his lighter moments when his wit could be caustic, his behavior earthy, and his mood an almost schoolboyish prankishness. This is the Brahms of the last two movements of the Sextet—amusing and sprightly music, uninhibited and full of the sheer joy of living. The first two movements are in a more sober vein, but they are not without youthful exuberance and melodic warmth. The second movement, a set of variations on a graceful, flowing theme, was a favorite with Brahms.

Recommended recording: VM-296 (Pro-Arte; Hobday; Pini).

### *String Sextet in G major, "Agathe"*

One of Brahms's many love affairs was with Agathe von Siebold, the daughter of a Göttingen professor. This affair followed the usual Brahms pattern. Brahms wooed her passionately, and then—when marriage appeared imminent and inevitable—he fled in horror. "I love you! I must see you again!" he wrote to Agathe. "But fetters I cannot wear!" Agathe broke off the affair, while Brahms—characteristically enough—wrote music to express his feelings at

the outcome: the G major Sextet. "Here," Brahms told Gänsbacher, pointing to his Sextet, "I have emancipated myself from my last love!" It was to be ever thus: Brahms was always to sublimate his inner passions and erotic yearnings in his music.

The G major Sextet, Op. 36, is known as the "Agathe" Sextet for two reasons. First, it was Brahms's farewell to his lady love. Second, he ingeniously worked the notes of A, G, A, H (the German equivalent of our B-natural), E into the principal theme of the first movement. The whole Sextet, writes Schauffler, "has a veiled, mysterious quality, a silvery shimmer, pierced now and then by such glorious highlights as the second subject of the *Allegro non troppo*, the *Presto giocoso* Trio of the Scherzo, the touching final variation of the *Poco Adagio*, and the last pages of the finale's coda."

Recommended recording: VM-371 (Budapest Quartet; Hobday; Pini).

## SONATAS

### Piano Sonatas

#### *Sonata in F minor*

Brahms composed three sonatas for the piano. The first two—in C major, Op. 1, and F-sharp minor, Op. 2—are of early vintage. Though they disclose something of Beethoven's richly sonorous writing for the keyboard, they suggest, rather than present, the mature Brahms. It is in the F minor Sonata, Op. 5, that we first get true indications of latent power, and the first glimpse into Brahms's possible future as a creative artist. In his analysis of this work, Schauffler wrote: "The heroic *Allegro maestoso* wears like reinforced adamant, with its grimly virile first subject, the delicate romance of the second, the maturity of the uncanny development, and the crushing might of the coda. The *Andante* embodies the very essence of youthful romanticism, in holding true to its poetic motto from Sternau:

The twilight glimmers, by moonbeams lighted,  
Two hearts are here, in love united,  
And locked in a blest embrace.

No wonder that, in places, it draws perilously near the saccharine. From this excess of sensibility, however, it is saved by the splendid final outburst in D flat, which Wagner, who happened to hear it while working on the *Meister-singer*, did not disdain to draw upon for Hans Sachs' first monologue. The spell is abruptly marred by a much more crude and literal loan, negotiated this time by Brahms himself. The *scherzo* begins by appropriating the first tune of Mendelssohn's C minor trio *finale*. One is soon reconciled, however, by the contagious vitality of the music, by the prophetic modernism of the nine measures of bizarre dissonances beginning at bar 52, and still more by the D flat section, with its calm chant of profound comfort. The brief *Rückblick*, or *Retrospect*, is an extra movement. It casts one lingering, longing

look behind, and translates the *Andante's* palpitating lunar bliss to the plane of tragedy. This is a new note in the sonata, a felicitous enrichment of its form. The *finale* suffers somewhat from a lack of inner unity, from the unhappy experiment of indulging in two elaborate codas, and from a contrapuntal parade closely bordering on ostentation. These faults, however, are more than redeemed by the distinctively Brahmsian appeal of the whole—especially the dreamy second theme, and the deeply inspired third, which surely is one of the bravest, most reassuring melodies in the whole realm of music."

### Sonatas for Violin and Piano

Brahms composed three sonatas for violin and piano: G major, Op. 78, A major, Op. 100, and D minor, Op. 108. They contain some of Brahms's most mellow music. In these sonatas he wrote well for the violin, knowing both the capabilities and the limitations of the instrument and catering to them. To the violin he confided thoughts of great intimacy.

#### *Sonata in G major*

#### *Sonata in A major*

#### *Sonata in D minor*

The first of the three sonatas, the G major, is known as the *Rain Sonata* because of a persistent 16th-note figure for the piano in the third movement, suggestive of falling raindrops. Of this sonata, Niemann wrote that it is an "instrumental idyll, thoroughly intimate in both style and in writing, with an elegiac and tenderly melancholy tinge and a prevailing atmosphere of still contemplation and pensive cheerfulness."

The second sonata, in A major, and the most famous of the three, is known as the *Thun Sonata* because it originated at Lake Thun during one of the composer's summer vacations. It opens with a theme reminiscent of Walther's Prize Song from the *Meistersinger* of Wagner. Throughout melodic and pensive—with a second movement of rare loveliness—it concludes with a majestic finale that includes many passages fiery with hot Hungarian blood.

The third sonata, in D minor, is dedicated to Hans von Bülow. In Richard Specht's opinion it might very well be a tonal portrait of the composer—full as it is of strange restlessness and tensions, of febrile moods alternating with occasional sobriety, of repose contrasted with mischievous humor.

Recommended recordings: *Rain Sonata*, VM-121 (Busch; Serkin); *Thun Sonata*, VM-856 (Heifetz); *D minor Sonata*, CM-324 (Szigeti; Petri).

### Sonatas for Violoncello and Piano

#### *Sonata in F major*

Brahms composed two sonatas for 'cello and piano. The first, in E minor, Op. 38, was the first work that he published for solo instrument and piano.

It is not too happily written for the 'cello and, despite moments of great power and imagination, it is of lesser importance among Brahms's works. More famous and more important is the second sonata, in F major, Op. 99. Analyzing this work, E. S. Knights wrote: "In the first movement, Allegro vivace, the 'cello opens with bold declamatory phrases in a high register. . . . It then settles to the vigorous and passionate mood of the music which is the setting for the whole of the first movement. The second movement is a beautifully lyrical Adagio affettuoso, richly wrought music with a wealth of expressive imitation and detail. The Scherzo has a trio section with a big, broad tune. The finale, Allegro molto, is a rollicking rondo with a theme having something of a folk-tune atmosphere. Quiet relief is afforded in the middle section."

Recommended recordings: E minor, VM-564 (Piatigorsky; Rubinstein); F major, VM-410 (Casals; Horszowski).

### Sonatas for Clarinet and Piano

#### *Sonata in F major*

#### *Sonata in E-flat major*

Brahms's two sonatas for clarinet and piano—in F major, Op. 120, No. 1, and in E-flat major, Op. 120, No. 2—are the composer's swan songs in the field of chamber music. These works have the warm and gentle glow of peaceful old age looking back on a life that had been not too difficult. Serenity, calmness, mellowness, subdued colors, restrained feelings—such are the qualities to be found in these two masterpieces. The clarinet is uniquely endowed to voice such pensive moods and gray colors, and the music in both sonatas is written beautifully for that instrument. Brahms composed both works (as he did the Clarinet Trio and the Clarinet Quintet) for his clarinetist friend Mühlfeld, who with Brahms introduced them at the home of the sister of the Duke of Meiningen at Berchtesgaden on September 19, 1894. These sonatas are frequently performed by viola in place of clarinet.

Recommended recordings: for viola and piano, F minor, C-LX225-7 (Tertis; Cohen); E-flat major, VM-422 (Primrose; Moore).

## SONGS

Brahms stands among the most important in that imperial line of song composers that began with Schubert and included Robert Franz, Schumann, and Hugo Wolf. A Brahms song is a miniature drama. The emphasis is not exclusively on a beautiful melody—though many of Brahms's melodies are exquisite in their lyric beauty. A Brahms song is frequently declamatory in character, because Brahms is translating a poem into tone and with rare felicitousness achieves the proper musical thought for the poetry. He places great emphasis on the piano accompaniment, which is often the medium



for his most dramatic expressions. Although in his search for dramatic intensity he is sometimes unvocal, when we listen to a Brahms song we are given a profound and moving esthetic experience.

Many of Brahms's songs—beginning with his first masterpiece *Liebestreu*, from Op. 3—are passionate expressions of love. Brahms, who loved women but fled from marriage, sublimated many of his love emotions in his songs. They are ardent and sensuous, personal and profoundly felt, as, for example, *Wie bist du, meine Königin*, or *Meine Liebe ist grün*. Many—like the Daumer songs, Op. 57—are pervaded with melancholy. It is almost as if, in writing these love songs, Brahms knew that such love was not for him, and as if his grief unconsciously penetrated into his love songs.

Robert Haven Schauffler divides the songs into two groups. In the first he includes the masterpieces which must be included in any consideration of Brahms's greatest works: *Sapphic Ode*, *Wie bist du, meine Königin*, *Liebe und Frühling*, *Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer*, *Die Mainacht*, *Wie Melodien*, *Regenlied* (Op. 59, No. 3), *Erinnerung*, *Vier Ernste Gesänge* (the "Serious Songs" written to Biblical words), *Auf dem See* (Op. 59, No. 2), and *Feldeinsamkeit*.

In the second group, Schauffler places those songs which—though they are not among Brahms's great works—are nevertheless songs of importance and individuality: *Botschaft*, *Komm bald*, *Von ewiger Liebe*, *Dein blaues Auge*, *Magyarisch*, *O wüsst ich doch den Weg zurück*, *Sommerabend*, *Therese*, *Vergebliches Ständchen*, and *Wiegenlied* (the famous Cradle Song).

Cecil Gray is of the opinion that Brahms is frequently at his greatest in his songs. "It is true he may not attain quite to the heights which Schubert does in a small handful of unexcelled masterpieces . . . but with this one glorious exception it is difficult to see whom one could place above him. . . . A song of Brahms is not . . . a mere turgid flow of notes without any intrinsic value apart from the poem, but a delicately organized and articulated structure with a logic of its own. . . . Brahms . . . was never content until he had created a vocal line of intrinsic melodic beauty and an accompaniment as full of musical subtlety as he could make it."

Probably in no other form did Brahms reveal such versatility of style. A gem like the *Wiegenlied* (among the best known of Brahms's songs, composed in 1868 and dedicated to one of his former sweethearts on the birth of her daughter) is an exquisite melody in an exquisite setting, offering a marked contrast to the feverish passion of *Von ewiger Liebe*. The comparatively light-hearted *Vergebliches Ständchen* is at the opposite emotional pole from the austere and poignant *Ernste Gesänge* and *Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht*. And we may set off the classic repose of *Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer* (a melody that Brahms used for the slow movement of his Second Piano Concerto) against the buoyant and carefree *Die Mainacht*.

Recommended recordings: Brahms Song Society, two volumes, VM-522, 751 (Kipnis); A Brahms Recital, CM-453 (Lehmann).

## SONG CYCLES

*Four Serious Songs*

The *Four Serious Songs*, Op. 121, to texts drawn from the Bible, was the penultimate of Brahms's works, and was published in the last year of the composer's life. It is music of overwhelming emotional impact—suffused with a tragedy of Grecian proportions. It is the contemplative speech of a man who knows that he is on the doorstep of death, to whom life (though it has been difficult) is still precious, and who views the coming end as a stroke of merciless destiny. A bitter *Weltschmerz* is found in these songs; but, at moments, a philosophic resignation as well. Simple in their construction, of an almost stark nakedness, these songs are of a forthright projection of a tragic mood, sometimes too painful to be contemplated.

It is frequently asserted that the gloom of these songs arose from Brahms's grief at the death of his beloved Clara Schumann. This is not substantiated by facts. The songs were completed *before* Clara's death, and were dedicated not to her but to Max Klinger.

Recommended recording: VM-522 (Kipnis).

## SYMPHONIES

Though the first outlines of a symphony were sketched by Brahms in 1855, it was not until twenty years later that a completed symphony left his pen. This alone should serve notice with what awe Brahms regarded the symphony form, and how greatly his adoration of Beethoven constrained him. During these years, Brahms developed and matured, perfected his idiom and evolved his individuality. Thus the First Symphony, when it was finally written, was the product of Brahms's full maturity as a composer. Certainly no other first symphony in all musical history is such a completely realized masterpiece, so maturely conceived and with such assurance. It has, somewhat loosely, been called "Beethoven's Tenth Symphony." But this is to imply that Brahms was an imitator of Beethoven, which he most certainly was not. The C minor takes a step ahead of the Beethoven symphonic form—and a step such as no composer had been able to take since the Master's death in 1827.

With his wonderful feeling for the logic of his structures, Brahms in his four symphonies erected architectural designs impressive for their majesty. But, together with logical structure, there are rich poetic ideas, impassioned speech, sensuous beauty, and dramatic force. It is these traits in his symphonies that mark Brahms as the true inheritor of Beethoven's symphonic crown.

*Symphony No. 1 in C minor*

Brahms completed his First Symphony, Op. 68, in 1876. It was introduced

at Karlsruhe under the composer's direction on November 4 of the same year. It was poorly received; not for some years were its grandeur and nobility to be deservedly appreciated.

Walter Niemann speaks of the First Symphony as Brahms's "Pathetic." If it has a tragic character, it is the grandeur and nobility of a Greek drama rather than the frenzy of Tchaikovsky. Once again (as in the Quintet) Niemann is reminded of Beethoven—the heroic style, the high-minded speech, the strength and force, the architectural design, are all traits found in the *Eroica*. And the last movement has not only a spiritual affinity with that of the Ninth Symphony—both are proud and exultant affirmations of the spirit—but the principal theme of each has strangely similar identities.

The symphony opens with an introduction which immediately sounds the note of sublimity. The violins soar ecstatically against a background of throbbing tympani. The sublimity is dissipated by the passionate thrust of the first subject, which is developed with strength and is succeeded by a brusque and severe second subject. Both themes are worked out in the movement with a cogent drive and a dramatic thrust which once again makes Niemann think of Beethoven because of its "monumental pathos" and "demoniac character." The second movement, *Andante sostenuto*, while loosely constructed is one of the most lyrical movements written by Beethoven. It is built out of two beautiful melodies, the first of which is played at the opening of the movement by the strings, and the second by an oboe. The movement is carried to a pitch of emotional delirium, and then subsides to introspective calm. The third movement, *Un poco allegretto e grazioso*, is more restrained than the Beethoven scherzo, and is characteristically Brahmsian in its mellowness and fluid melodic flow. It is the last movement—*Adagio*; *Allegro non troppo, ma con brio*—that is the apex of the entire symphony. This is Beethoven drama, Beethoven majesty, at its best. The mystery and suspense of the introductory *Adagio*, with the increasing tempo of the *pizzicati* quickening the heart and pulse, is succeeded by music of incomparable grandioseness. William Foster Apthorp has admirably described this movement as follows: "With the thirtieth measure the tempo changes to *piu andante*, and we come upon one of the most poetic episodes in all Brahms. Amid hushes, tremulous harmonies in the strings, the horn and afterward the flute pour forth an utterly original melody, the character of which ranges from passionate pleading to a sort of wild exultation, according to the instrument that plays it. . . . A short, solemn, even ecclesiastical interruption by the trombones and bassoons is of more thematic importance. As the horn tones gradually die away, and the cloudlike harmonies in the strings sink lower and lower—like mist veiling the landscape—an impressive pause ushers in the *Allegro non troppo, ma con brio*. . . . The introductory *adagio* has already given us mysterious hints of what is to come; and now there bursts forth in the strings the most joyous, exuberant *Volkslied* melody, a very Hymn to Joy, which in some of its phrases,

as it were unconsciously and by sheer affinity of nature, flows into strains from the similar melody in the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony."

Recommended recording: VM-875 (NBC Symphony—Toscanini).

### *Symphony No. 2 in D minor*

Of the four symphonies, the Second, Op. 73, is the most genial. It reveals an Italian warmth, a suggestion of the placid beauty of the Italian landscape, that in some quarters has won it the sobriquet "Pastoral." It was composed in the summer of 1877 and was first performed on December 30, 1887 by the Vienna Philharmonic under Hans Richter's direction. Pohl, Haydn's biographer, was present when Richter rehearsed the symphony. He wrote: "Thursday was the second rehearsal; yesterday, the 'dress' rehearsal. Richter has taken great pains in preparing and will also conduct today. This is a magnificent work . . . every movement pure gold; and all four together form a necessary whole." In a letter to Hanslick, Brahms wrote as follows about it: "If I should let you hear a symphony this coming winter, it will sound so jolly and pleasant that you will believe I composed it especially for you and your young wife. That's no work of art, you'll say; Brahms is merely canny; the Wörther Lake is virginal soil, and melodies are so plentiful that you have to take care not to crush any underfoot."

"The work," wrote Richard Specht, "is suffused with the sunshine and the warm winds playing on the water, which recall the summer at Pörschach that gave it life. The comfortably swinging first subject at once creates a sense of well-being with its sincere and sensuous gladness. . . . This movement is like a fair day in its creator's life, and outshines the other three sections—the brooding andante, the rather unimportant scherzo . . . the broad sweeping finale which, for all its lively, driving motion, strikes one as cheerless and artificial in its briskness."

Recommended recording: VM-694 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy).

### *Symphony No. 3 in F major*

It was Hans Richter who referred to this symphony as Brahms's "Eroica." Amplifying on this designation, Niemann wrote that it was indeed heroic, but "in the Brahmsian spirit. In spite of its truly heroic and virile strenuousness and conflicts, its last, supreme word of wisdom is a serene resignation. This is, moreover, expressed with such wonderful truth and moving effect in the musical form in which it is clothed that we may venture to say that in its purely human qualities the Third Symphony is Brahms's most typical, personal, and important symphonic work. In no other symphony has Brahms unveiled his own individual nature so wonderfully, in no other has his whole personality found such marvellously pure and undisguised expression, in no other symphony has he displayed such spiritual independence as this."

The Third Symphony was composed in 1882-83, and was first performed

by the Vienna Philharmonic on December 2, 1883. At the first performance, the Wagner-Bruckner "*ecclesia militans*" (in Kalbeck's bitter description) was at hand to make a fiasco of the concert. But the Brahms supporters—and the eloquence of the music itself—proved too powerful, and the concert was a success.

There was no diminution of Brahms's strength or originality in this Third Symphony—from the overwhelming chords at the opening announced by the wood winds and the brass, followed immediately by the restless sweep of the main themes in the violins; down through the breath-taking contrast of the simpler and quieter andante (almost a folk song), ending in a magnificent flight of strings; and the forward sweep of the final two movements, the last of which (again as in the other symphonies) carries warning notes of an anticipated storm. At the close of the last movement, Brahms reintroduces (tremolo in the strings) the first theme of the first movement, thereby unifying the entire symphony into a coherent whole.

Recommended recording: VM-1007 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

### *Symphony No. 4 in E minor*

Brahms's symphonic peroration, Op. 98—the symphony in which his fancy soared to the highest altitudes of nobility—is permeated with an autumnal melancholy. Yet it is no hysterical grief we hear here, but a restrained, self-contained, and disciplined emotion of heroic character. Heinrich Riemann has given the following apt description of the E minor: "It begins in ballad fashion. Blaring fanfares of horns and cries of pain interrupt the narration, which passes into an earnest and ardent melody. The themes, especially those in fanfare fashion, change form and color. The formal appearance—now powerful, prayerful, now caressing, tender, mocking, homely, now far away, now near, now hurried, now quietly expanding—ever surprises us, is ever welcome: it brings joy and gives dramatic impetus to the movement. A theme of the second movement constantly returns in varied form, from which the chief theme, the staccato figure given to the wind, and the melodious song of the violoncellos are derived. The third movement, *Allegro giocoso*, sports with old-fashioned harmonies, which should not be taken too seriously. This is not the case with the Finale, an artfully contrived *ciacona* [chaconne] of antique form but of modern contents. The first eight measures give the 'title page' of the *ciacona*. The measures that follow are variations of the leading theme; wind instruments prevail in the first three, then the strings enter; the movement grows livelier, clarinets and oboes lead to E major; and now comes the solemn climax of the movement, the trombone passage. The old theme enters again . . . and rises to full force, which finds expression in a *piu allegro* for the close."

The symphony was composed in 1884–85. The manuscript was nearly burned in a fire that broke out in Brahms's house, but was fortunately saved by one of his friends. Its first performance took place in Meiningen in 1885,

and it was played at the Vienna Philharmonic's concert of March 7, 1897—the last concert that Brahms attended before his death on April 3, 1897.

Recommended recording: VM-730 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky)

## TRIOS

### *Trio in B major*

Brahms composed the B major Trio, Op. 8, in 1854, when he was only twenty-one. Thirty-seven years later—the composer being now at the height of his powers—he revised the work completely. Thus two versions exist of this trio—representative of the early and of the late Brahms—offering an invaluable view of the ways in which Brahms had grown and developed. Dr. Hans Gál, co-editor of the complete edition of Brahms's works, remarks how far superior the later version is to the earlier one: "Before one has edited this work, one has no idea how many subtle and marvellous changes the Master made in it! It was absolutely miraculous that he could have approached it with so objective a detachment; for this particular piece was, in 1891, perhaps the best-known and most popular of all his chamber music."

Schauffler finds the earlier version of the trio an "exhilarating outburst of the joy of youth" together with pages of dullness in which "he had exhibitionistically revelled in learning for learning's sake, at the expense of unity and well knit, logical form." But the later version, in Schauffler's opinion, "offers that almost unique combination: the exuberance of a mighty youth, kept within the bounds of superb form by the experience of maturity. Certainly there are for the chamber musician few more enlivening pleasures than to take part in the young, radiant opening of the B major—a tune which was to be a lifelong favourite of the composer's—or in the quintessential coda, or in the spiralling Beethovenian fervours of the *scherzo's* Trio, or in the celestial intensities of the *Adagio*."

Recommended recording: VM-883 (Rubinstein; Heifetz; Feuermann).

### *Trio in C minor*

The C minor Trio, Op. 101, was composed in the summer of 1886 at Thun—the year and the place of Brahms's composition of the "Thun" Violin Sonata and the F major 'Cello Sonata. Describing this trio, William Murdoch wrote: "It is powerful music, brusque and harsh at times, angular and bad-tempered, but most full of masculine vigor. It has its quiet moments—the C-sharp minor section in the development of the first movement; the spirit of the second movement; all of the Andante, and thirty-four bars in the Finale, though this last section is masculine enough. But even this amount of tranquillity does not prevent the main character of the music from being defiant and relentless. The coda of the Finale, another splendid example of ingenious writing, clears away the dark color, breaks the bands of oppression with a

sense of release, and makes a triumphant finish. . . . This Trio is performed more than either the B major or the C major. It is shorter and more compact, has melodic grip and an air of conviction."

Recommended recording: Decca 25627-29 (Budapest Trio).

## BRITTEN

BENJAMIN BRITTEN, one of the most gifted among younger British composers, b. Suffolk, 1913. He studied first with Frank Bridge, then with John Ireland, Arthur Benjamin, and Harold Samuel at the Royal College of Music, where he was a scholarship pupil. After graduating in 1934, he turned to composition and soon won recognition through major performances in England, Italy, Spain, and the United States, and at festivals in Salzburg and Norwich.

BRITTEN writes in an expansive style which strives for epical rather than for lyric expression. Though sometimes ponderous, at its best his music has strong individuality and admirable cogency. He has written chamber music and choral music, but he is happiest in his music for orchestra (though he tends to orchestrate heavily and sluggishly), and it is this that has won him an international reputation.

### ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

#### *Sinfonia da Requiem*

The *Sinfonia da Requiem* was composed during Britten's stay in the United States, and completed in Long Island in 1940. On March 29, 1941, it was given its world première by the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Society under John Barbirolli.

Britten wrote this work as a gesture of homage to the memory of his father, who had died some time before its composition. It is in three movements. The first, called "*Lacrymosa*," is a slow, marching lamentation; the second, "*Dies Irae*," is a dance of death; the third, "*Requiem Aeternam*," is a threnody dominated by flutes. Britten considers this work an emotional rather than a liturgical document, even though the titles of the movements were drawn from the Catholic Requiem Mass.

This work was chosen to represent England when the Japanese Government selected works of various nations for performance at a festival to celebrate the birthday of the Japanese Imperial Dynasty. The performance never took place—history, and Pearl Harbor, intervening.

# BRUCH

MAX BRUCH, b. Cologne, 1838, a pupil of Ferdinand Hiller. His first work to receive performance was an operetta, produced in 1858, and his first success was an opera, *Loreley*, performed in 1863. In 1865, Bruch became conductor of the orchestral concerts in Coblenz. A year later, he was appointed Kapellmeister at Sonderhausen. The outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War brought him to Berlin, where he settled permanently. In 1892 he became head of the master school of composition at the Royal High School of Music, holding this post for twelve years. He died in Friedenau, Berlin, in 1920.

BRUCH was neither a great nor an original composer, but he wrote pleasing music characterized by sound instincts, a charming manner, and lovable melodies. A romanticist, he brought to his works a warmth of feeling which to our present taste is one of their most ingratiating traits. Riemann insists that Bruch was at his best in his choral music, of which he wrote an entire library; but his choral music is no longer heard. He is remembered today almost exclusively for his Violin Concerto in G minor and his *Kol Nidrei*.

## CONCERTO

### *Concerto in G minor*

Though Bruch wrote the first sketches for his popular Violin Concerto, Op. 26, as early as 1857, he did not complete the work until 1866. It was first performed in April of that year. Subsequently it was revised, with the technical aid of the famous violinist Joseph Joachim to whom it is dedicated. Of it, J. A. Fuller-Maitland wrote as follows: "Grave and earnest from beginning to end, yet rising into passionate outbursts of almost tragic intensity, this work acquired at once a place of its own among violin concertos. Its melodies have a character deeper, nobler, and more genuinely expressive than any former work of its composer."

The concerto is in three movements: Allegro moderato, Adagio, and Allegro energico. The Adagio movement is characteristic of Bruch's gift for writing expressive melodies that appeal to the heart.

Recommended recording: VM-1023 (Menuhin; San Francisco Symphony—Monteux).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Kol Nidrei*

In 1880, Bruch became conductor of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society as successor to Sir Julius Benedict. It was during his tenure of this post that he composed his famous *Kol Nidrei*, Op. 47, for solo 'cello and orchestra. It was first performed at a concert of the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig on October 20, 1881, with A. Fischer as the soloist.



## SYMPHONIES

Elsewhere the editor of this book (in collaboration with his brother) wrote as follows about the nine Bruckner symphonies: "He always thought of himself as Beethoven's successor, of Beethoven's Nine Symphonies not as deterrents but as so many challenges. Never too critical of his own work, in fact always regarding his own creation as a mystical outpouring to be accepted with simplicity and humility (but not to be questioned), he yet had one quality which clashed with the more naïve peasant elements in him: a passion for grandeur. He rarely thought in small forms. With justice, he had been called the creator of the 'baroque' in music. He bore the relation to Beethoven and Bach that the Carracci and Borromini bore to Michelangelo and Leonardo. And as these strove to outdo in grandeur the works of their predecessors and, instead, succeeded in multiplying detail, complicating ornament, substituting the operatic for the emotional, dazzling and confusing the eye, so Bruckner, too, in that insatiable passion for vastness, was led frequently to substitute declamation for eloquence, expanse for grandeur, detail for singleness of design. Where inspiration did not suffice, there he allowed rhetoric to intrude.

"But when his spirit soared—in magnificent, if not always sustained, flights—he revealed something of Beethoven's greatness. Thus, in certain passages of the Seventh Symphony—in the celebrated slow movement (later interpreted as an elegy on Wagner's death), his speech is stripped of pretentiousness and pomp, and he feels simply and deeply. Later hero-worship, already born in the year of the Seventh, sought to sanctify every note of this, and other symphonies, and save them from sacrilegious doubt. But Bruckner's symphonies were like himself: the peasant and mystic was sturdy, direct, deeply emotional; the man of the city was spurious, self-conscious, rhetorical, and nervous. And these two souls within him dwelt side by side to the last."

*Symphony No. 4 in E flat, "Romantic"*

The *Romantic* Symphony was completed in 1874 and first performed in Vienna in 1881. Bruckner originally prepared an elaborate and detailed program to describe his symphony, but that he did not take it too seriously was proved by his comment that in the last movement "I've forgotten completely what picture I had in mind." The symphony, however, is appropriately entitled, for as a whole it is romantic in character. It is in four movements. The first, *Allegro molto moderato*, is expansive in character, built upon two dynamic themes preceded by the introductory horn solo and concluded by a coda of grandiose proportions. The *Andante* is a funeral march, and the *Scherzo* (one of Bruckner's happier inventions) employs a hunting subject. In the *Finale*, the composer sums up the material used in the previous movements.

The famous conductor Hans Richter saw the score at Bruckner's home and

was so impressed that he offered to perform it without delay. Bruckner attended the rehearsals and, in Richter's own words, "when the symphony was over, Bruckner came to me, his face beaming with enthusiasm and joy. I felt him press a coin into my hand. 'Take this,' he said, 'and drink a glass of beer to my health.' " The performance, on February 10, 1881, was a considerable success and marked the belated turning point in Bruckner's fortunes.

Recommended recording: VM-331 (Saxonian State Orchestra—Böhm).

### *Symphony No. 7 in E major*

This is Bruckner's *magnum opus*, his most consistently inspired work, and the one in which his aspirations towards grandioseness and sublimity came closest to realization. Composed between 1881 and 1883, it was given its first performance under the baton of Artur Nikisch at the Leipzig Gewandhaus on December 30, 1884. The symphony was accorded a magnificent reception, and when Bruckner came on the platform to take his bows, the house went into an uproar. "One could see from the trembling of his lips and the sparkling moisture in his eyes," wrote one critic who was present, "how difficult it was for the old gentleman to suppress his deep emotion. His homely but honest countenance beamed with a warm inner happiness such as can appear only on the face of one who is too good-hearted to succumb to bitterness even under the pressure of most disheartening circumstances. Having heard this work and now seeing him in person, we asked ourselves in amazement, 'How is it possible that he could remain so long unknown to us?' " "It is the most significant symphony since 1827," exclaimed the conductor Hermann Levi (in sublime disregard of Brahms). Levi conducted the work in Munich, when it was given another rousing acclaim.

The Adagio movement is one of Bruckner's greatest pages—a funeral march blending majesty and sorrow, touched with an other-worldly radiance. It was believed (by those who disregarded chronology) that the music was inspired by the death of Wagner; the movement had been completed late in 1882, four months before Wagner's death. Still another Wagnerian explanation for the movement was provided by Bruckner himself: "At one time I came home and was very sad; I thought to myself, it is impossible that the Master can live long, and then the adagio came into my head." In any case, there is no doubt that Bruckner intended the music as homage to Wagner, as proved by his use of the Bayreuth tubas both in the slow movement and in the Finale.

Whatever its origin, the Adagio is among the most stirring threnodies in musical literature, the grief of a noble heart speaking of pain with restraint. "Here," as Lawrence Gilman wrote, "the voice of Bruckner's grieving, of his tenderness, of his exalting praise, speaks out of this nobly musing and impassioned elegy with subjugating eloquence and beauty. . . . In the music of this elegy . . . there is a curious intimation of immortality. These pages are filled with a musing, consolatory tenderness, with a touch of that

greatness of style which we sometimes get in the Elizabethans when they speak of death. . . ."

Recommended recording: VM-276 (Minneapolis Symphony—Ormandy).

## BUXTEHUDE

DIETRICH BUXTEHUDE, b. Helsingborg, Sweden, 1637. Studied with his father, following which he held several minor posts as organist. When he was thirty, Buxtehude became organist at St. Mary's in Lübeck, remaining there for forty years, playing the organ, and organizing concerts. Both Handel and Bach made pilgrimages to Lübeck to hear Buxtehude. He died in that city in 1707.

**T**HOUGH Buxtehude composed chamber and choral music, he is most famous for his organ works. He was one of the outstanding composers for the organ before Bach, and his influence upon the master was profound. "As John the Baptist was to Christ," wrote A. Eaglefield Hull, "so was . . . Buxtehude to Bach." And Charles S. Terry pointed out that in Buxtehude Bach "found a powerful stimulus and a great example."

### ORGAN MUSIC

Buxtehude composed an entire library of organ music: choral preludes, chaconnes, fantasias, fugues, passacaglias, etc. He was greatest with those forms which were in an embryonic state when he found them and which he developed to full maturity before passing them on to their ultimate master, Bach. These forms included the chorale prelude, the passacaglia, the chaconne, and the toccata. In the richness of his thematic treatment, in his inventiveness in the use of colors, moods, effects, he towered far above his predecessors.

Discussing this organ music, Parry wrote: "Buxtehude's whole manipulation of detail, harmony, phraseology and structure is singularly mature and full of life. The breadth and scope of his works, his power of putting things in their right places, his daring invention, the brilliancy of his figuration, the beauty and strength of his harmony, and above all a strange tinge of romanticism which permeated his disposition, as Spitta has justly observed, marked him as one of the greatest composers of organ music, except the one and only Johann Sebastian Bach. And in Johann Sebastian Bach's organ works the traces of the influence of Buxtehude are more plentiful than those of any other composer. It is not too much to say that unless Dietrich Buxtehude had gone before, the world would have had to do without some of the

most lovable and interesting traits in the divinest and most exquisitely human of all composers."

It is believed by many authorities that the form in which Buxtehude achieved his most inspired music was the chorale prelude. Cecil Gray wrote: "The chorale prelude was raised to an unexemplified pitch of elaboration and enriched with every conceivable device of contrapuntal and decorative resource at his disposal. In his hands, indeed, the theme is frequently so varied and adorned with arabesques as to become totally unrecognizable and even when presented textually, it is often hidden from sight altogether under the exuberant welter of ornamentation with which it is surrounded."

Recommended recordings: Chorale prelude, *Ein feste Burg*, Musicraft 1050 (Weinrich); Chorale prelude, *Ich ruf' zu dir Herr Jesu Christ*, Musicraft 1129 (Weinrich); Chorale prelude, *Lobt Gott, ihr Christen allzugleich*, Musicraft 1129 (Weinrich); Chorale prelude, *Von Gott will ich nicht lassen*, Musicraft 1050 (Weinrich); Prelude and Fugue in E minor, Musicraft 1132 (Weinrich); Toccata in F major, Musicraft 1129 (Weinrich).

# CARPENTER

JOHN ALDEN CARPENTER, b. Park Ridge, Ill., 1876. Studied music first privately, then at Harvard University, finally with Bernhard Ziehn. He was also a pupil of Elgar. Though he entered business and made a success of it, he did not abandon music, and has combined both endeavors up to the present time. He was one of the first composers in America to use the jazz idiom seriously.

**I**N his best works, Carpenter combines human sympathy with fine wit. A master of his technique, he has always written his larger works with self-confidence and with the power of projecting an ingratiating personality.

## BALLET

### *Skyscrapers*

Carpenter's most successful work has been his ballet *Skyscrapers*, the first artistic use of the jazz idiom within a ballet. He was commissioned to write this work by Diaghilev, and it was given its première in Monte Carlo in 1925. A year later, it was performed at the Metropolitan Opera House with outstanding success. The ballet is in two acts.

In the first act, we see a skyscraper in the process of construction: Workmen are engaged in the motion of building, as hurrying crowds pass by. The workers leave the stage, but they soon return, each one with a girl on his arm. The second act takes place in Coney Island: Despite

the outbreak of a storm, the workers enter and engage upon their task of building. When they leave, the storm passes and everything is in festive mood. Merry-makers make the scene alive with gaiety. A dancer appears and is joined by four girls. A brawl ensues and the brawlers are arrested by a policeman. The scene is emptied of all except a road-sweeper, a Negro, who lies down to sleep. He dreams of the Southland, and he sees and hears his neighbors in a religious chant and dance. He joins them. The scene suddenly reverts to Coney Island as sandwichmen cross the stage. A factory whistle sounds. The skyscraper is again seen, and men return to the scaffold to work.

For this ballet, Carpenter wrote a uniquely effective score, spiced by the jazz idiom. "*Skyscrapers*," wrote the present editor in an English music journal, "is deliciously palatable to any musical ear wearied of all the dusty platitudes with which most moderns dress their music. . . . Mr. Carpenter takes the . . . themes of jazz and weaves them with marvelous effect into his symphonic fabric. . . . All of Mr. Carpenter's effects are vitriolic. . . . His orchestration is a miracle of coruscant tone colors, and his developments are terse and effective. In this music one feels the stress, the fret, the confusion that govern modern life in America. Not for jest or for satire is jazz used here, but as a very serious idiom with which to express the enervating life in a modern city."

A fine suite for orchestra from *Skyscrapers* has been played by most of the major American symphony orchestras.

Recommended recording: orchestral suite, VM-130 (Victor Symphony—Shilkret).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Adventures in a Perambulator*

Carpenter's quiet but delightful humor is admirably exemplified in the well-known orchestral suite in which he tries to convey through music a baby's impressions while being wheeled in his perambulator by his nurse. The suite is ingratiatingly melodic, sprightly, vividly graphic, with amusing interpolations of popular melodies. It is in six sections.

Carpenter supplied his own program notes in the preface of his score.

I. *En voiture*. Every morning—after my second breakfast—if the wind and sun are favorable, I go out. . . . My nurse is appointed to take me. . . . I am wrapped in a vacuum of wool, where there are no drafts. . . . I am placed in my perambulator, a strap is buckled over my stomach, my nurse stands firmly behind me—and we are off!

II. *The Policeman*. Out is wonderful! . . . It is confusing, but it is Life! For instance the Policeman—and Unprecedented Man! Round like a ball; taller than my father. . . . He walks like Doom. My nurse feels it too. She becomes less firm, less powerful. My perambulator hurries, hesitates, and stops. They converse. They ask each other questions. . . . When I feel that

they have gone far enough, I signal to my nurse . . . and the Policeman resumes his enormous Blue March. He is gone, but I feel him after he goes.

III. *The Hurdy-gurdy*. Then suddenly there is something else. I think it is a sound. . . . I find that the absorbing noise comes from a box—something like my music-box. . . . I have a wild thought of dancing with my nurse and my perambulator—all three of us together. Suddenly, at the climax of our excitement, I feel the approach of a phenomenon that I remember. It is the Policeman. He has stopped the music. . . . Delightful forbidden music! [Carpenter amusingly injects a phrase from Berlin's *Alexander's Ragtime Band* into the hurdy-gurdy music.]

IV. *The Lake*. My nurse firmly pushes me on. . . . The land comes to an end, and there at my feet is The Lake. I feel the quiver of the little waves as they escape the big ones and come rushing up over the sand. . . .

V. *Dogs*. We pass on. . . . It is Dogs! We are coming upon them without warning. Not one of them . . . all of them. . . . They laugh, they fight, they run. And, at last, in order to hold my interest, the very littlest brigand starts a game of "Follow the Leader," followed by all the others. It is tremendous! [Again Carpenter has amusing interpolations—this time fragments of *Oh Where, Oh Where, Has My Little Dog Gone?* and *Ach, du lieber Augustin*.]

VI. *Dreams*. . . . My mind grows numb. . . . The wheels of my perambulator make a sound that quiets my nerves. I lie very still. In order to think more clearly, I close my eyes. My thoughts are absorbing. I deliberate upon my mother. . . . I hear her voice quite plainly now, and feel the touch of her hand. It is pleasant to live over again the adventures of the day—the long blue waves curling in the sun, the Policeman who is bigger than my father, the music-box, and my friends, The Dogs. It is pleasant to lie quite still and close my eyes, and listen to the wheels of my perambulator.

Recommended recording: VM-238 (Minneapolis Symphony—Ormandy).

# CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO

MARIO CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO, b. Florence, 1895. Studied at the Cherubini Institute in Florence, then with Pizzetti. He composed his first major work in his twentieth year, and five years after this his opera *La Mandragola* won the Italian Prize. In 1939, Castelnuovo-Tedesco left Italy to establish his home in the United States.

GUIDO GATTI has written as follows about Castelnuovo-Tedesco's traits as a composer: "The general physiognomy of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's work bears a striking resemblance to the region about his native Florence, rich in soft undulating lines, all delicately traced by the whole gamut of colors, grays

and greens of every value. The psychology of his work also resembles that of his own people, whose spirit is ironic, pungently satirical, yet at the same time practical and philosophic. Castelnuovo's work shows unmistakable derivation from that of his master Pizzetti. But one must concede to him something new and quite his own: a certain sense of humor totally lacking in Pizzetti, and an aristocracy of thought which reflects a native good taste and broad culture. His work reveals a technical mastery which is really amazing."

## CONCERTOS

### *Second Piano Concerto*

Castelnuovo-Tedesco composed his Second Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in 1937, but its first performance did not take place until November 2, 1939, when the composer himself performed it with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. Describing this work, the composer said: "Three movements include an opening one marked *Vivo e leggero*, a *Romanza* in slow dreamy tempo, and a final section, *impetuoso*. The second leads into the last, bridged by a *cadenza*. My own conception of such a score is definitely one in which the solo piano shall have brilliant opportunity. . . . My aim has been to unite the Chopinesque keyboard writing with a modern orchestral treatment, containing interesting development of themes and structures.

### *The Prophets*

*The Prophets* is the second of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's violin concertos, succeeding the first, *Concerto Italiano*, by seven years. "Heifetz had already played my first violin concerto," explained the composer concerning the origin of this work. "When he asked me to my great pleasure to write a new concerto for him, I felt I wanted to express another aspect of my personality—the Jewish one. It was also the time when the anti-Semitic movements started and became harder in Middle Europe, and my reaction was that I felt proud of belonging to a race so unjustly persecuted; I wanted to express this pride in some large work, glorifying 'the splendor of the past days' and the burning inspiration which enflamed the 'envoys of God,' the Prophets. The violin seemed to me particularly adapted to personify, as a protagonist, the free and vivid eloquence of the Prophets, while the orchestra, in the multiform aspects of the symphonic texture, could evoke all the voices of the surrounding world: voices of people, voices of Nature, voices of God. An ambitious plan, I acknowledge, and preparing myself for such a task, I wished to base my attempt on some foundation, more reliable, scientifically speaking, than the 'oral tradition' which helped me for the former work. . . . The only work I was able to find of the historic scientific kind on the Jewish Italian melodies was a collection printed in Florence about 1870, by Federico Consolo . . . I know scholars despise this collection, not only for the harmonizations of the melodies, in the dull 19th-century style, but for the themes themselves, often doubt-

fully transcribed. In fact, the few I picked out I tried to change and to bring back a more authentic, or at least more plausible form; and for the rest I had to supply themes of my own invention.

"I remember that when Toscanini examined the score (and was so very much interested in the historical side of the work, about which he asked me many explanations) he found my own themes much more Jewish than the traditional one, and perhaps he was right. Toscanini granted me the great honor of a first performance of *The Prophets* under his direction, and with Jascha Heifetz as soloist, in Carnegie Hall, with the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra on April 12, 1933."

The concerto is in three movements, each of which is intended as a characterization of a major prophet: Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Elijah.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *The Taming of the Shrew*

Shakespeare's plays have notably influenced Castelnuovo-Tedesco's artistic development. He has composed more than thirty songs to Shakespearean lyrics and seven concert overtures to Shakespearean plays. *The Taming of the Shrew*, composed in 1930, was introduced in Florence in February 1931. It is dedicated to "Petruchio." Humorous, spicy, ebullient, it reveals the lighter side of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's creative talent. It is built on three principal subjects. The first, dramatic and passionate, opens the overture and is used throughout the work as a sort of connecting link. The second subject is heard two bars later, voiced by the violins and violas. The third theme, marked *impertinente*, is heard in the middle of the work, pronounced by two horns.

### *Twelfth Night*

Concerning the *Twelfth Night* Overture, composed in 1933, the composer wrote as follows: "It is not a literal retelling of the story so much as a work inspired by some characters in the play. There is a slow introduction picturing the dreamy Prince Orsino, who always asked for songs. The main section is more brilliant and depicts the character of the foppish Malvolio, while throughout the work are references to others, such as the heroine and the clown. Three old men dance to a tune suggesting an antique *galliard*."



# CHABRIER

EMMANUEL CHABRIER, b. Ambert, Auvergne, 1841. Studied law, and was appointed to a post in the Ministry of the Interior, combining this work with the study of music. A performance of *Tristan* convinced him that his place was exclusively with music. He became an assistant conductor of the Lamoureux Orchestra and began to work intensively on composition. His first success as a composer came with *España*. Wagner's influence upon him was revealed in several of his operas. During the last two years of his life he was paralyzed, and he died in Paris in 1894.

CHABRIER might be said to be the precursor of Ravel and Debussy, anticipating their most daring innovations and effects. "Chabrier's style," wrote Vincent d'Indy, "is Chabrier himself, with his verve, altogether southern and spontaneous; with his goodnaturedness bordering on the heroic; with his wealth of images and his sallies, always unexpected; above all with his flow of tenderness, a fundamental trait of his genius, the primary cause of the irresistible melodic expansiveness that captivates us in his work."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *España*

In 1883, Chabrier left for a three months' vacation in Spain. There he came into contact for the first time with Spanish folk music and dance. How deep an impression these made upon him was proved by a letter he wrote to a friend at the time: "The gypsies sing their malagueñas or dance the tango. . . . He has really seen nothing who has not seen two or three Andalusians twisting their hips eternally to the beat and to the measure of *Anda! Anda! Anda!* and the eternal clapping of hands. They beat with a marvelous instinct  $\frac{3}{4}$  in contra-rhythm while the guitar peacefully follows its own rhythm. As the others beat the strong beat of each measure, each beating somewhat according to caprice, there is a most curious blend of rhythms."

Chabrier made copious notes of the musical themes and rhythms he heard in Spain and brought these back with him. Upon his return, he decided to write an orchestral rhapsody incorporating Spanish folk materials as an expression of his own enthusiasm for the glamorous country. He played his sketches for the conductor Lamoureux, who was so charmed by the music that he urged Chabrier to orchestrate it without delay. On November 4, 1883, Lamoureux introduced *España*. Both composer and conductor had prophesied during the last rehearsal that the work was doomed to failure because it was too exotic. However, it was acclaimed rousingly, and Chabrier's fame as a French composer was born with that performance.

Within *España*—a freely constructed fantasia on original Spanish themes—Chabrier has incorporated two famous Spanish dances, the jota and the malagueña. "*España*," wrote Julien Tiersot, "is a musical tableau possessing

an extraordinary intensity of life, a brilliant color, and a dazzling sonority. Across the seductive and intriguing rhythms of its themes one seems to perceive the contortions of Spanish dancers carried away as by some frenetic whirlwind. Strange associations of sounds, . . . accumulations of harmonies which are intentionally incomplete, chords with free combinations, rhythms either broken or badly superimposed—this is what one perceives in this work, which is so different from anything one has heard in France, Germany, or anywhere else.”

Recommended recording: V-4375 (Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler).

### *Joyeuse Marche*

This work is believed to be a musical description of a group of inebriated and hilarious musicians staggering along on their way home. In no other work did Chabrier reveal such engaging humor. “It is an example of the composer’s genius at its height,” wrote R. Gover, “and is something more than the jolly noise it appears at first hearing. With its exuberance and good humor it is more profound than Rossini.”

After a short flourish by full orchestra, a solo oboe is heard in the first principal subject—a witty and capricious theme. This theme, and another for violins, are developed dexterously and often boisterously.

Recommended recording: V-36037 (Victor Symphony—Bourdon).

### *Overture to Gwendoline*

Nowhere is Wagner’s influence on Chabrier demonstrated more clearly than in the opera *Gwendoline*, on a libretto by Catulle Mendès, which Chabrier composed in 1885. Its story has to do with the Danish sea king, Harald, who—having conquered the Saxons—falls in love with one of them, the beautiful Gwendoline, who returns his love. Made powerless by his great passion, Harald is eventually killed by the Saxons; and Gwendoline commits suicide. Chabrier’s musical treatment of this libretto has obvious Wagnerian characteristics—in instrumentation, in the melodic line, and in the use of the *Leitmotif*.

The music drama was introduced at the Théâtre de la Monnaie, Brussels, on April 10, 1886. Because of the bankruptcy of the management, the opera was given only two performances, but between 1889 and 1893 it enjoyed substantial success in Germany.

The *Gwendoline* Overture is famous and has enjoyed great popularity at symphony concerts. It is full of violent moods and dramatic climaxes (reminiscent of Wagner) and is more like a symphonic poem than an overture. The first theme describes the Danish attack. After a brief transition (a theme suggesting Gwendoline’s concern over Harald’s safety), the orchestral storm breaks, suggesting the fever and stress of the play itself. An effective climax brings the Overture to a magnificent conclusion.

Recommended recording: Decca 25312-3 (Colonne Orchestra—Pierné).

## PIANO MUSIC

Chabrier's conception of the piano, wrote R. Gover, "differed considerably from [that of] the majority of his contemporaries. He seems indeed to have regarded it as a portmanteau orchestra rather than anything else, and we can invert a common critical judgment of Schumann by describing Chabrier as a man who always thought orchestrally, whatever the medium for which he was composing."

*Bourée Fantasque*

The *Bourée Fantasque* is Chabrier's masterpiece for the piano. It betrays an engaging feeling for the grotesque, together with a happy capacity to inject surprise. Writing brilliantly for the keyboard, with a rich palette of colors and a striking variety of rhythms, Chabrier combines whimsical flavor with sound artistic purpose. "This piece," wrote W. Wrights Roberts, "is a joy; no less fine are the resource and the variety of its treatment, the bright play of its changing key-color, the ever keener jostling humor and beauty, rhythmic life and melodic charm, as it whirls on its vertiginous ending."

An excellent orchestration of this work was made by Felix Mottl, and was first performed under Mottl's direction in 1897. Chabrier himself also made an orchestral transcription.

Recommended recording: piano version, V-4418 (Boynet); orchestral transcription by Chabrier, C-17108D (Paris Symphony—Meyrowitz).

# CHARPENTIER

GUSTAVE CHARPENTIER, b. Dieuze, Lorraine, 1860. A pupil of Massenet at the Paris Conservatory, where he won the Prix de Rome. His Bohemian life in Montmartre supplied experiences that he was to utilize in his masterpiece, the opera *Louise*. An ardent Socialist, he associated himself personally with the working classes, and helped to create several humanitarian projects on their behalf. Though he has composed some charming songs and a pleasing orchestral suite entitled *Impressions of Italy*, he is today famous almost exclusively for his opera *Louise*.

## OPERA

*Louise*

**I**N four acts, book by the composer, first performed at the Opéra-Comique in Paris on February 2, 1900.

It was ten years between the time when *Louise* was composed and the moment when it reached public performance. It was submitted originally to the

Paris Opéra, but the directors were horrified by its realism as well as by its contemporary setting and costuming. "Come down from your blessed *Butte* [Montmartre] and breathe the air of Paris, and you will be more reasonable," one of the directors told him. Eventually, the Opéra-Comique accepted it. "It will be the *Faust* of my old age," remarked director Carvalho, who had introduced Gounod's masterpiece in 1859.

Charpentier wrote his book around an actual occurrence. His setting is Paris's Montmartre, which he knew so well. Julien, a painter, is in love with a dressmaker, Louise. Louise's father, suspicious of artists, refuses his permission for their marriage. Julien and Louise elope and live in the Bohemian atmosphere of Montmartre. Word comes to Louise that her father is dying, and she rushes to his bedside. The sight of his daughter revives and strengthens the old man, who now insists that she abandon her Bohemian existence and return to his home. Louise stoutly refuses and defiantly leaves her father's house as he excoriates the maleficent influence of Paris.

"Charpentier maintains a balance between drama and music," wrote Edward Burlingame Hill. "He can be forcefully dramatic without losing that concrete ability to depict in music which stands at the root of all successful opera. Throughout *Louise*, Charpentier's musical invention is unflagging. Whether in the lyrical narrative of the first act, the adroit atmospheric suggestion in the prelude of the second, the brilliant festivity of the third, or the unrelieved gloom of the first part of the fourth act, Charpentier is always apposite in his musical emphasis on the dramatic situation. Even the dangerously near-hackneyed '*Depuis le jour*' which opens the third act never fails to thrill when sung with adequate orchestral support. . . . Its dominant note, both orchestrally and musically, lies in its spontaneity. *Louise* may be at times disfigured by sentimentality and over-emphasis, often excusable by dramatic exigencies or as the logical consequence of its composer's realistic tenets, but these defects are outweighed by its preponderant originality. As a record of Bohemian Paris, as a 'document' for the sociologist or the student of folk song, but above all else as a poignantly human drama, *Louise* occupies an outstanding position."

Its success at its première was outstanding. The audience cheered after each act, and the demonstration when the opera was concluded was thunderous. H. Imbert, reviewing the new opera in *Le Guide Musical*, wrote: "It was Gustave Charpentier who in an article which appeared in the *Journal* on February 23, 1896, wrote: 'I alone can judge the necessary range for my work, and for me the universe is contained within the district where I live!' It is this maxim that guided the composition of *Louise*, the first stage work of the young composer. Intoxicated by the multitudinous voices of a large city, particularly by the street noises, he has built a great symphony, in which the orchestra gathers and proclaims all the cries that are daily launched by poor little street vendors. . . . These are the leading themes of his work. No one

could make a better orchestral dish of all these cries than he who was so early enamored of the life of the populace. . . . Upon this orchestral framework is built, on the stage, a vocal recitative which expresses the dialogue with singular art."

The most famous arias of *Louise* are that for tenor, "*Dans la cité lointaine*" in Act I, and that for soprano, "*Depuis le jour*," of Act III.

Recommended recording: abridged version arranged by Charpentier, C-Opera Set 12 (Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra—Bigot).

## CHAUSSON

ERNEST CHAUSSON, b. Paris, 1855. Entered the Paris Conservatory in 1880, studying composition with Massenet. Soon afterwards he became a pupil of César Franck, who influenced him greatly, turning him toward abstract musical forms and arousing in him the ideal of writing pure music. In his creative work, Chausson was continually inspired and guided by his master's music. In 1888 he became secretary of the Société Nationale de Musique, the mission of which was to bring the music of younger French composers to public notice. He died at Limay in 1899 as the result of a bicycle accident.

IN his music, Chausson was not concerned with the writing of pure and abstract beauty. "Where he is himself," wrote G. Jean-Aubry, "his emotion is pure and noble, with nothing to make us feel that it seeks to outrange us. On the contrary it is there, at our side, in a discreet attitude, waiting gently meditative for us to pay attention to the simple, lasting words it utters."

### CONCERTO

#### *Concerto in D major*

Chausson's chamber-music concerto for piano, violin, and string quartet, Op. 21, is regarded by Jean-Aubry as "one of the most important French chamber music works of the end of the nineteenth century." Jean-Aubry describes it as music of "charm and fullness," of "richness of imagination" and "perfection of technique."

Its writing has such purity, and its structure is so lucid, that its great charm is apparent even on first contact. It is in four movements. The first, *Décidé*, is built upon two major themes: the first, a long and sustained melodic flight, is introduced by the solo violin, while the second—more decorative and percussive—is heard with the piano. In the second movement, *Sicilienne*, we have a gentle melody that grows more emotional and passionate as the movement

develops. The third movement, Grave, is one of the most somber pages Chausson wrote, expressive of a profound and unconsolable grief. In the Finale, the work is brought to a breath-taking close with an exuberant burst of energy and spirit.

Recommended recording: VM-877 (Heifetz; Sanromá; Musical Art Quartet).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Poème*

That blend of spiritual poetry and a beauty touched by religious contemplation which we find in the best of Franck is the quality that gives deathlessness to the *Poème* for violin and orchestra, Op. 25. From the atmosphere of mystery with which the composition opens—the solo violin sounding a chant—the work progresses, after a soaring melodic flight by the soloist, to a passage of agitation and unrest which offers a welcome respite from the quiet contemplation and gentle melancholy that pervades the entire work. The *Poème* ends with the opening hymnal chant voiced by the entire orchestra.

In the *Poème* Chausson is the true disciple of Franck, with “the soul of a poet,” as Julien Tiersot remarked. “His melodies . . . are exquisite.” It was composed in 1896, and was first performed at a concert of the Colonne Orchestra in 1897 with Eugène Ysaÿe (to whom the work is dedicated) as soloist.

Recommended recording: V-7913-4 (Menuhin; Paris Symphony—Enesco).

## SYMPHONY

### *Symphony in B flat*

In this symphony, Op. 20, Chausson is more noticeably influenced by Wagner than by Franck. The orchestration has Wagnerian color, and in sonority and dynamics it shows a closer affinity to the music of the *Ring* than to the *Beatitudes* or the D minor Symphony. Composed in 1890, it was first performed at a concert of the Société Nationale in Paris, on April 18, 1891. It is in three movements. The first, *Lent* (Allegro vivo), is rhapsodic in character, opening with a majestic introduction, which is repeated at the close of the movement; the principal theme is pronounced by horn and bassoon, and the subsidiary one by 'cellos and clarinets. The second movement, *Très lent*, contains an exquisite melody for English horn and 'cellos. The third movement, *Animé*, opens with a long introduction which leads to an energetic and spirited theme for basses; a second subject, religious in character, voiced by the whole orchestra, completes the major thematic material of the movement.

Recommended recording: VM-950 (Chicago Symphony—Stock).

# CHÁVEZ

CARLOS CHÁVEZ, Mexican composer, b. Mexico City, 1899. Studied music there and in Europe. When he returned to Mexico from his travels he devoted himself to teaching and composition. In 1928 he founded (and has since directed) the Orquesta Sinfonica de Mexico, and from 1928 to 1933 (and again in 1934) he was director of the National Conservatory in Mexico City. He has also been influential in gathering and publicizing the folk music of Mexico. In 1938 he won a Guggenheim Fellowship. He has served as a guest conductor of leading American orchestras.

CARLOS CHÁVEZ has made a deep study of the music of the Mexican Indian, and this has served as the basis for his own works. He writes in a powerful style which fascinates the listener by its individuality. As one French critic wrote of him: "Chávez tends towards dryness and harshness as though some incurable pessimism had been instilled in him. Somber and fatalistic, this music refuses to smile. It possesses a strange power."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *H.P.*

Chávez has provided the following illuminating information about this "symphony in four movements": "The initials of the title stand for 'Horse Power,' a symbol of the dynamic energy which characterizes our era. The first part of the symphony to be written was the last movement, which was completed for small orchestra in 1926, and played shortly thereafter at a concert of the International Composers' Guild in New York, under the direction of Eugene Goossens. The symphony in its four-movement form for large orchestra was completed in 1931, and was first played, under the composer's leadership, during the 1931-32 season of the Symphony Orchestra of Mexico."

In 1932, Leopold Stokowski presented *H.P.* as a ballet, with scenery and costumes designed by Diego Rivera. "The ballet *H.P.*," wrote Chávez, "symbolizes the relations of the Northern regions with those of the Tropics, and shows their interrelationship. The Tropics produce things in their primitive state—there are pineapples, coconuts, bananas, and fish. The North produces the machinery with which to manufacture from the products of the Tropics the necessary material things of life. The Ballet depicts the fact that the North needs the Tropics, just as the Tropics needs the machinery of the North; and it attempts to harmonize the result."

The dances from the second and third movements of the symphony have frequently been performed independently on symphony programs. "The 'Danza Agil' conveys the movement of life on the ship, and is interrupted by the sensuous and nonchalant Tango. The 'Huapango' and 'Sandunga' express the Tropics as contrasted with the North."

*Sinfonia de Antígona**Sinfonia India*

These two works have been influenced by Chávez's researches into Mexican-Indian music. As Henry Cowell points out, the music is not an attempt to recreate primitive music in larger and sophisticated forms, but rather borrows from it the stark simplicity—the effort to pierce to the very essentials—which is the predominating trait of Indian music. Here, “all dross is cut away—no more wedding-cake decorations; every note is meaningful and needed.”

The *Sinfonia de Antígona* was commissioned by the Department of Fine Arts in Mexico in 1932 as incidental music for a performance of Jean Cocteau's *Antigone*. “The *Sinfonia de Antígona*,” wrote Chávez, “is a piece of music suggested by the Greek tragedy. It is a symphony, not a symphonic poem. That is, it is not subject to a program. Antigone, her self-confidence, defiance, heroism, and martyrdom are expressed by the music as a whole, not successively. The most elementary musical materials serve for this music, which could not be grandiloquent. Bare and elemental, it could not be expressed by laconic strength, just as what is primitive is reduced to its elements because it is primitive. The work has the basic structure of the sonata, and is strictly a symphony, though in one movement.”

*Sinfonia India* followed the *Sinfonia de Antígona* by three years, and was first introduced over the Columbia Broadcasting System on January 23, 1936. It has since then been heard on programs of the leading orchestras. This symphony in three movements utilizes not only authentic Indian folk themes, but even such Indian instruments as the water-gourd, rasps, rattles, and Indian drums.

Recommended recordings: *Sinfonia de Antígona*, V-12338-9 (Symphony Orchestra of Mexico—Chávez); *Sinfonia India*, V-12337-8 (Symphony Orchestra of Mexico—Chávez).



# CHERUBINI

LUIGI CHERUBINI, b. Florence, 1760. Composed his first opera following intensive study with Sarti. In 1784, he visited London where he came into contact with Handel's works. In 1788, he settled permanently in Paris, becoming one of its most celebrated musical figures. From 1789 to 1792 he was conductor of light Italian opera, and in 1795, when the Conservatory of Paris was founded, he became an Inspecteur. He was associated with the Conservatory for forty-seven years, serving as its director for about two decades. During these years, he wrote numerous operas which enjoyed great popularity throughout Europe. He died in Paris in 1842.

OF the many operas composed by Cherubini, none has survived to the present time. Though he was considered a major composer in his own time, Cherubini's works are practically forgotten, except for the overtures to two of his operas which are occasionally performed by symphony orchestras, and an effective and deeply moving (though rarely heard) Requiem for chorus and orchestra. Cherubini, as Combarieu pointed out, was strongly influenced by the composers who preceded him. "He belongs," wrote Combarieu, "between the old tradition of Italian music and the brilliant works of the nineteenth century, but more to the former than to the latter." Beethoven, Haydn, and Weber thought highly of him, though it cannot be said that time has confirmed their estimate.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Anacreon Overture*

Cherubini's opera *Anacreon* was first performed at the Paris Opéra on October 4, 1803. It is said that the play seemed so incredible and absurd to its first audiences that they interrupted its progress with laughter. And now, although the opera has passed into obsolescence, the overture has remained alive, a work of dignity and originality that pleases even modern audiences. In listening to it we agree with the following estimate by Streatfeild: "The solidity of his concerted pieces and the picturesqueness of his orchestration go far to explain the enthusiasm which his works aroused in a society which as yet knew little, if anything, of Mozart." In two respects this overture is unique: it introduced the English horn to the orchestra, and it exploited *brio* passages, consisting of carefully developed crescendos, which Rossini was soon to use with consummate skill.

Recommended recording: Decca 25234-5 (Concertgebouw Orchestra—Mengelberg).

### *The Water Carrier Overture*

*The Water Carrier* (sometimes known by its French title, *Les Deux Journées*) is generally considered Cherubini's masterpiece. First performed

in Paris, at the Théâtre Feydeau on January 11, 1800, it was soon repeated in most of Europe's leading opera houses. As with *Anacreon*, the opera itself is forgotten, but the overture has survived, once again attesting to Cherubini's skill in writing instrumental music, particularly in writing pleasing melodies.

## CHOPIN

FRANÇOIS-FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN, b. Zelazowa-Wola, near Warsaw, 1810. Studied at the Warsaw Conservatory, publishing his first work, a rondo for two pianos, at the age of fourteen. He left his native country permanently in 1830, settling first in Vienna, then in Paris where he became a darling of the salons, a successful pianist and teacher, and a favorite of such famous musicians as Liszt, Bellini, Meyerbeer, and Berlioz. In 1837, Liszt introduced Chopin to the famous woman novelist George Sand. Thus began a ten-year relationship which was marked by an uninterrupted clash of temperaments. Always frail of body, in 1838 Chopin suffered a severe illness which ultimately developed into tuberculosis. He died in Paris in 1849 and was buried in Père Lachaise.

CHOPIN stands in the same relation to piano music that Beethoven does to the symphony, Mozart to the opera, Handel to the oratorio, and Schubert to the *Lied*. All these fields of music had been cultivated successfully before these masters lived and worked; yet such were their personal powers that, under their cultivation, the soil became fertile as never before, yielding new and richer fruit. Though there was an abundance of music for the piano before the time of Chopin, it can be justly said that modern piano music was born with him. Even with his second opus, the Variations on Mozart's *Là ci darem la mano*, piano music suddenly acquired such new horizons that Schumann was inspired to write in 1831: "Off with your hats, gentlemen—a genius! . . . I bow before Chopin's spontaneous genius, his lofty aims, his mastership!"

True, Chopin's world was a comparatively limited one. But it was a world of his own making, and one in which he was the unchallenged master. It has been said of Chopin that if he was small in great things he was nevertheless great in small things. Few composers have so accurately measured their own strength and limitations. He recognized his strength when, from the very first, he turned to the piano as the instrument best adapted to speak his thoughts, and remained faithful to it (except for a few minor works) to the end of his life. No one before him, and few since, knew the resources of the piano as he did, could make it speak with so rich and varied a language, could apply to it such an elastic range of dynamics and color. Equally well did he know his weakness. With the exception of the two piano concertos and the

three sonatas, he confined himself exclusively to the smaller piano forms, set for himself the task of being their master and of adapting them to his many artistic demands. The larger forms were not for him, and he avoided them. Even granting passages of genius in the concertos and sonatas, they cannot be accepted (as his smaller works can) without reservations.

If he was not of the stature of Bach or Beethoven or Brahms, if his art did not embrace the more ambitious forms of the symphony, the Passion, or the string quartet, he possessed to a great degree the imagination, the depth and intensity, the capacity to project a variety of moods and sentiments, which belong to the true master. His technique, when he wrote in the smaller forms, has long been accepted as a model. What he wrote, he wrote with exquisite perfection. His form was always meticulously correct, as precise and as clear in every detail as his handwriting was on his musical manuscripts. His lyrical gifts were abundant, seemingly inexhaustible; always did they acquire new freshness through the iridescent display of gem-like embellishments with which he decorated his melodic line. His harmonic texture was rich and varied, his rhythmic vitality robust. But beyond this he had a wide gamut of expression—much wider than is generally ascribed to him. His music has not only a deep poetic vein and an effeminate tenderness (so long identified as his outstanding traits) but also passion and strength that are heroic in character (as in his best polonaises and mazurkas). Not only did he speak in his music of a pain that stabs the heart, but also (in some of his scherzos) of a whimsical lightness that is almost boyish in its exuberance.

Chopin's output for the piano embraces 169 works. These include two concertos, three sonatas, ballades, études, preludes, mazurkas, waltzes, polonaises, fantasias, impromptus, scherzos, together with a variety of other pieces. In this elastic variety of works it is possible to find reflected the many facets of Chopin's personality. In his polonaises and mazurkas, he is the Pole who speaks with nationalistic ardor of a country in which he was born but which he had not seen since his twentieth birthday. In the ballades and nocturnes he is the sensitive son of 19th-century Romanticism, the poet of tones. In the études, he is the penetrating student of his instrument. And in the waltzes, he is the darling of the Paris salon, writing music which is less profound than the mazurkas or the polonaises, but in which the Chopin magic casts as ever its inescapable spell and bewitches the listener.

## BALLADES

Chopin composed four ballades: the first is in G minor, Op. 23; the second, in F major, Op. 38; the third, in A-flat major, Op. 47; the fourth in F minor, Op. 52.

The ballade was a musical form first used by Loewe. It was improvisational in character and comparatively free in form. In it the composer tells a tone-

story. This is not to imply that the ballade was programmatic, but that the quality and the development of the music gave it the character of a musical narrative. Chopin's ballades are among his most poetic works, often touched with gentle melancholy. Characteristic of these four ballades is the first in G minor, a work of intense passion alternating with brooding melancholy. Niecks described it as "quivering with the most intense emotions, full of sighs, sobs, groans, and transports of passion. The seven introductory bars (lento) begin firm, heavy and strong, and become progressively looser, lighter, and softer, ending in a discord which certain editors have thought it their duty to correct." Following this outburst of pain, the narrative begins simply and poignantly, soon growing in intensity and passion. A second subject brings relief from the stress in the form of a melody of rare beauty, but the agitation returns and sweeps the ballade to a fiery end. The Ballade in G minor was written during the storm of Chopin's unhappy love affair for Maria Wodzinska, and is a reflection of it.

Recommended recording: the four Ballades, VM-399 (Cortot).

## CONCERTOS

Chopin's two concertos for the piano are not organic masterpieces. They lack breadth of form and bigness of ideas. They are ineptly orchestrated. Their greatest charm lies in individual passages which, in themselves, are as complete as a prelude, a nocturne, or an étude. Chopin was essentially the master of cameos. But, though the concertos do not represent Chopin at his greatest, they have many moments of incomparable musical fascination and charm, and it is these moments which have kept them alive.

### *Concerto No. 1 in E minor*

The Concerto in E minor, Op. 11, now known as the first of the two concertos because of its earlier publication, was actually the second to have been composed. Chopin wrote it in 1830, and it was first performed (with great success) in Warsaw on October 11 of the same year. While its inspiration is less sustained than that of the more famous F minor concerto, it has pages of great appeal. The concerto opens with a comparatively long and rhapsodic orchestral introduction which officially presents the principal themes of the first movement. The second movement, a Romance, is, as Chopin himself explained, "sustained in a romantic vein, tranquil and somewhat melancholy. It should produce the same impression as if the eye were resting upon a landscape grown dear to one, which calls up beautiful memories in the soul, for instance on a fine moonlight night in spring." The last movement, Rondo, took Chopin many months to write; he had completed the first two movements in May, but—because he could not put himself in the properly "enthusiastic" frame of mind necessary for the writing of the rondo—he did not

complete the last movement until August. It is brilliant in character, with an air of spontaneity which fails to betray the difficulty Chopin had in writing it.

Recommended recording: VM-418 (Artur Rubinstein; London Symphony—Barbirolli).

### *Concerto No. 2 in F minor*

The "second" piano concerto, Op. 21, was composed one year before the "first," having been completed in the winter of 1830. It was first performed in Warsaw on March 17, 1830. It comprises three movements; *Maestoso*, *Larghetto*, and *Allegro vivace*. The first movement is introduced by an extended orchestral passage in which the principal themes are set forth. Following the orchestral introduction, "the piano interrupts the orchestra impatiently, and then takes up the first subject," in the descriptive analysis of Niecks. "It is as if we were transported into another world and breathed a purer atmosphere. First there are some questions and expostulations, then the composer unfolds a tale full of sweet melancholy in a strain of lovely, tenderly entwined melody. . . . In the second subject he seems to protest the devotion of his heart, and concludes with a passage, half upbraiding, half beseeching, which is quite captivating—nay more, even bewitching in its eloquent persuasiveness." The second movement was inspired by Chopin's love for Constantine Gladowska, a fellow-student at the Warsaw Conservatory. "While my thoughts were with her," Chopin himself explained, "I composed the *Adagio* of my concerto." The concerto ends with a delightful *Allegro* which brings the work to a spirited close.

Recommended recording: VM-567 (Cortot; Orchestra conducted by Barbirolli).

## ETUDES

Chopin composed twenty-four famous *études*, twelve of which are collected in Opus 10, and twelve in Opus 25. Three additional *études*, known as the *Nouvelles études* were published in 1840.

The science of modern piano writing was formulated with these *études*. M. Ganche points out that Chopin "wrote them with a technical purpose including in them all the harmonic effects at which he was trying to arrive on the piano, and all the pianistic difficulties." But, like Bach who wrote his *Well-Tempered Clavier* for a definite technical purpose, Chopin gave his *études* an esthetic as well as a technical significance. They are among Chopin's greatest works for the piano, varied in color, sentiment, mood, atmosphere, inexhaustible in their musical imagination. With their brilliance and vigor they combine at times poetry with emotional feeling.

Already in the first *étude* of his Opus 10 (C major),—known as the *Arpeggio*—Chopin is exploring new horizons for the pianistic art. "Here in all its nakedness is the new technique," wrote Hunecker, "new in the sense of figure, pattern, web, new in a harmonic way. The old order was horrified at the

modulatory harshness, the younger generation fascinated and a trifle frightened. . . . The nub of modern piano music is in this study, the most formally reckless ever penned by Chopin.

The twelfth étude in the Opus 10 (C minor) is the famous *Revolutionary Etude*. Chopin composed it in 1831 in Stuttgart when he heard the news that Warsaw had fallen to the Russians. In this passionate piece, Chopin embodied his "grief, anxiety, despair over the fate of his relations and his dearly beloved father"—that and his own patriotic ardor. It has since become inextricably associated with Polish history. When, in 1939, Nazi troops laid siege to Warsaw, the *Revolutionary Etude* was used by the Warsaw radio with extraordinary effectiveness in keeping up the morale of the Warsaw citizens; and it was the last piece of music to be broadcast on the Warsaw radio before the Germans took over.

Other études that have become outstandingly popular include the E major, Op. 10 No. 3, which Chopin considered one of the most beautiful melodies he ever wrote; the G-flat major, Op. 10 No. 5, known as the *Black Key Etude*—a name given it by posterity (not by Chopin) because of the use of the black keys in the right hand; the C-sharp minor, Op. 25 No. 7, referred to as the *'Cello Etude*, because of the beautiful melody in the bass; and the G-flat major, Op. 25 no. 9 called the *Butterfly Etude*.

Recommended recording: all the études, C-LFX135-42 (Lortat).

## MAZURKAS POLONAISES

In these Polish dances, Chopin has expressed the soul of Poland. "I should like to be to my people what Uhland is to the Germans," he once said. Nowhere else did he succeed in this mission so well as in these artistic conceptions of two of Poland's most favored dance forms. Slavic in color and spirit, filled with an abandoned and passionate force, abounding with unusual progressions and harmonic schemes, these fifty-six Mazurkas and twelve Polonaises represent Chopin's most national expression. "To be sure," wrote H. Cuthbert Hadden, "the external qualities of his music are all his own. But the texture is essentially of native growth and native substance. Mr. Hadow brings this out more clearly and with more detail than any other writer who has touched on the subject. He shows that there are three separate ways in which the national influence affected Chopin's work. In the first place, it determined the main forms of his art-product. The popular music of Poland is almost invariably founded on dance forms and dance rhythms: more than a quarter of Chopin's entire composition is devoted ostensibly to dance forms. . . . A second point of resemblance is Chopin's habit of 'founding a whole paragraph either on a single repeated phrase in similar shapes, or on two phrases in alternation.' This is a very primitive practice, for which no artistic value can be claimed when standing by itself. . . . It is in the mazurkas that

we find this practice most successfully employed. . . . Thirdly, Chopin was to a considerable extent affected by the tonality of his native music. The larger number of the Polish folk-songs are written, not in our modern scale, but in one or other of the medieval Church modes—the Dorian, the Lydian, and the rest. . . . Of this tonal system, as Mr. Hadow shows, some positive traces may be found in the mazurkas.”

Generally speaking, the Mazurkas are more poetic than the Polonaises, with a wider range of mood. They are, in Huneker's description, “ironical, sad, sweet, joyous, morbid, sour, sane, and dreary.” The Polonaises (of which the *Military* and the *Heroic* are the most famous examples) are almost consistently tempestuous and stormy in temper, cogent, and demoniac. This, in short, is a far different Chopin from the familiar “introspective dreamer” of the Paris salon.

Recommended recordings: all the mazurkas, VM-626, 656, 691 (Artur Rubinstein); Polonaises No. 1 to No. 7, VM-353 (Artur Rubinstein).

## NOCTURNES

The first Nocturne, or “piece for the night,” was composed by John Field. In Chopin's hands, however, it became at its best a form breathing a serene beauty and nobility, suggestive of moonlight and a comforting darkness, of gentle introspection like the tranquil musings of a lyric poet. “Chopin,” wrote Huneker, “seldom exuberantly cheerful, is in many of his nocturnes morbidly sad and complaining. . . . Nevertheless, he ennobled the form originated by Field, giving it dramatic breadth, passion, even grandeur. Set against Field's naïve and idyllic specimens the efforts of Chopin are often too bejewelled, far too lugubrious, too tropical—Asiatic is a better word; and they have the exotic savor of the heated conservatory, not the fresh scent of the flowers grown in the open by the less poetic John Field. However, there are a few noble Nocturnes. . . . Chopin loved the night and its starry mysteries; his Nocturnes are truly night-pieces, some wearing an agitated, remorseful countenance; others seen in profile only; while many are like whisperings at dusk—Verlaine moods.”

The most famous of Chopin's twenty nocturnes, and one in which Chopin achieves a meditative calm that speaks of beauty at its purest, is the E-flat major (Op. 9, No. 2) which has also become famous in a violin transcription. Equally famous is the A-flat major, Op. 32, No. 2, with its subtle tints and hues—so successfully incorporated by Glazunov in the famous Chopin ballet *Les Sylphides*. One of the greatest of the nocturnes is the C-sharp minor, Op. 27 No. 1 to which the following macabre program is appended: “A calm night at Venice, where after a murder the corpse is thrown into the sea while the moon shines serenely on.”

Recommended recordings: all the Nocturnes, VM-461, 462 (Artur Rubinstein).

## PRELUDES

Chopin created his most perfect cameos in his twenty-six preludes, twenty-four of which are gathered in Opus 28. These preludes, often the last word in simplicity of form and conciseness of speech, are particularly significant as a reflection of the torments suffered by Chopin during the first year of his ten-year passion for George Sand. Chopin had followed his beloved to Southern France, and together they went on to Palma, on the island of Majorca, to spend what Chopin thought would be a love idyll. Unfortunately, what in his imagination had been poetry was converted by circumstances into earthy prose. The continuous rains and chill of Palma played havoc with Chopin's delicate constitution. He was frequently ill, in pain, subject to exhaustion, a victim to the strangest fantasies and nightmares. It was during this period that he wrote many of his Preludes. As George Sand recorded: "He would make an effort to laugh, and play us sublime things which he had just composed, or rather, terrible and heartrending ideas which had just taken possession of him, as it were without his knowledge, during this time of solitude, melancholy, and alarm. It was here that he published the finest of those short pages which he modestly called preludes. They are masterpieces. Many of them call up to the mind's eye visions of dead monks and the sound of their funeral chants, which obsessed him; others are suave and melancholy; these would come to him in his hours of sunshine and health, amid the sound of children's laughter beneath his window, the distant thrum of the guitar, and the song of the birds among the damp leafage; or at the sight of pale little roses blooming above the snow. Others again are dreary and sad, and wring the heart while charming the ear."

Recommended recording: Twenty-four preludes, Op. 28, VM-282 (Cortot).

## SONATA

*Sonata No. 2 in B-flat minor*

It is undoubtedly true that Chopin's three sonatas for the piano are not sonatas but that each consists of four independent compositions for piano joined together under a single convenient roof. What Schumann said of the B-flat minor sonata applies to all three: "To have called this a sonata must be reckoned a freak, if not a piece of pride. For he has simply linked together four of his maddest children in order to introduce them by fraud under this name into a place which otherwise they would perhaps never have entered."

If a work like the B-flat minor Sonata is not a sonata in the catholic meaning of that musical term—lacking organic unity—it nevertheless contains within itself wonderful music, filled with Chopin's most moving sentiments. It was composed during the year of 1838—a period of great stress to Chopin—and has been called a "poem of death." "The poem," in the descriptive anal-



ysis of M. Poirée, "a regular epic, opens in terror. The Allegro introduces a motive with breathless rhythm, short and abrupt—like a terrified gesture repelling us sharply—and a calmer theme, grand and noble, rather in the style of Weber at the beginning, afterwards rising into a superb lyrical outburst."

Poirée continues his description of the sonata with the following comment on the Scherzo movement: "Again we have at the beginning a similar effect of terrifying pursuit and headlong flight. Death is prowling about a ballroom, the echoes from which reach us, sometimes quick and animated, sometimes in slackened time and with languorous grace. And through the sweet, heart-stirring cantabile of the melody, deep voices murmur a dread psalmody on chords divided alternately between the two hands. But death has triumphed. Victorious and arrogant, he sees a whole crowd bending before him and doing him homage."

The third movement is the famous Funeral March—the best known threnody in all music. We are informed by Ziem of the manner in which this world-famous piece came into existence. In the studio of the artist Polignac, a skeleton was placed at the keyboard of a piano to the amusement of Ziem and others. "Some time later," reported Ziem, "Chopin came into my studio, just as George Sand depicts him—the imagination haunted by the legends of the land of frogs, besieged by nameless shapes. After frightful nightmares all night . . . he came to rest in my studio. His nightmares reminded me of the skeleton scene, and I told him of it. His eyes never left my piano, and he asked: 'Have you a skeleton?' I had none; but I promised to have one that night. . . . What had previously been something of a farce became, owing to Chopin's inspiration, something grand, terrible, and painful. Pale, with staring eyes, and draped in a winding sheet, Chopin held the skeleton close to him, and suddenly the silence of the studio was broken by the broad, slow, deep, gloomy notes. The *Funeral March* was composed there and then from beginning to end."

In the fourth movement, the Finale, the irresistible drive sweeps with oceanic force. "This great movement," wrote Schumann, "is perhaps the boldest page which has ever been written in the whole of music. Death appears here in all the cruel realism of its brute force, which destroys and ruins all things."

Recommended recording: CM-378 (Kilenyi).

## WALTZES

Chopin composed fourteen famous waltzes for the piano; there were several others as well, but they are rarely heard. Chopin had worthy precedent to guide him in converting a form meant originally only for the dance into a serious concert composition. The old masters frequently adapted the dances of their times into suites and partitas, while the waltz was used seriously by Haydn, Schubert, and Weber. The difference between, say, the piano waltzes

of Schubert and those of Chopin (besides an amplification of form and a further enlargement of melodic ideas) is essentially one of locale. Those of Schubert were composed in Vienna; they are light and frothy and full of a carefree boyish exuberance. Chopin's waltzes belong to Paris and are refined, disciplined, tender. Schubert did not forget that the predecessor of the waltz was the peasant Ländler; his waltzes frequently have a healthy peasant lustiness. With Chopin, all is in exquisite good taste; everything is well-mannered, as befitting the salon.

The enchantment of Chopin's waltzes can be equally felt by the unschooled layman and the discriminating musician. The unschooled layman can succumb to their endless moments of sheer melodic magic, to their captivating and subtle moods, to their suppleness of movement. The musician can admire Chopin's exquisite sense for architectonic construction, his inexhaustible imagination in the use of melody, harmony, and rhythm, and his infallible instinct and taste.

The Chopin of the waltzes is the Chopin so often described by biographers, the Chopin who could be meticulous about his dress, the wallpaper in his apartment, the flowers on his table. This is the Chopin who was the sensitive and frail child of the Paris salon, who detested the crude and the ugly, looked upon soft living and luxury as a physical necessity. The waltzes were composed by one who was an aristocrat to the tips of his fingers. Elsewhere, Chopin was more imaginative, more powerful, sometimes more noble in his conceptions. But in his waltzes his charm is most magnetic.

Recommended recording: VM-863, 864 (Brailowsky).

## CIMAROSA

DOMENICO CIMAROSA, b. Aversa, Naples, 1749. Studied at the Conservatory of Holy Maria of Loreto for eleven years, where one of his teachers was the eminent Piccinni. For twenty years, Cimaroso lived alternately in Rome and Naples, composing numerous operas which enjoyed great fame. He served as Kapellmeister for Catherine II in Russia, and later succeeded Salieri as Kapellmeister in Vienna. He died in Venice in 1801.

A PROLIFIC composer in many different forms, Cimarosa is known today almost exclusively for his opera-buffa masterpiece, *Il Matrimonio Segreto* (*The Secret Wedding*). "He was the finest example," wrote George T. Ferris, "of the school perfected by Piccinni, and was, indeed, the link between the old Italian opera and the new development." His influence upon his contemporaries and successors was far-reaching. As Edward J. Dent points out,

Mozart "took over his conventions—his breathless back-chat in recitative, his charming tunes, his patter songs for the bass, his chattering ensembles—and added to them his own warmth of harmony and ingenuity of orchestration."

## OPERA

### *Il Matrimonio Segreto*

In two acts, libretto by Giovanni Bertati, first performed at the Vienna Burgtheater on February 7, 1792.

It was during his tenure as Kapellmeister in Vienna that Cimarosa composed his masterpiece. It was first performed on February 7, 1792, in Vienna to an enthusiastic audience. At the second performance, on February 9, the Emperor Leopold II attended, and the audience was so enthusiastic that the entire opera had to be repeated. But it had disturbed Cimarosa to notice that, in his imperial box, the Emperor was making no sign of appreciation—that as a matter of fact he did not once applaud. At the end of the performance, however, the Emperor stood up in his box and (according to contemporary report) cried: "*Bravo, Cimarosa, bravissimo!* The whole opera is admirable, delightful, enchanting. I refrained from applause in order not to lose a single note of this masterpiece!" The Emperor then invited the audience and the performers to supper, following which they all returned to the theater for the repeat performance.

With *Il Matrimonio Segreto*, Cimarosa became one of the earliest composers to convert the opéra-bouffe into a form of rare grace and charm. For sheer spontaneity of expression, profusion of delectable melodies, and the ability to etch wit, malice, mockery in music, the score of *Il Matrimonio* has remained through the years a thing of wonder. Cimarosa is at his best in turning a neat musical phrase into a sardonic chuckle, in writing a tripping figure for the violins or reeds to mock at one of his characters. From beginning to end, *Il Matrimonio* is a joy to the ear.

The librettist drew his book from an English comedy of the same name written collaboratively by George Colman the Elder and David Garrick, and first performed in London in 1766.

The lawyer, Paolino, has secretly married Carolina, daughter of a rich and greedy merchant. In order to mollify the merchant so that he may accept and approve when he learns of this marriage, Paolino tries to arrange a match between his rich friend (curiously named "Count Robinson") and the merchant's older daughter, Elisetta. Unfortunately, the Count falls in love with Carolina—to her father's great satisfaction; while the spinster sister falls in love with Paolino. The only way for Paolino to extricate himself from this mess is to flee with his new wife. But he is intercepted by the merchant, who is horrified to discover that Carolina has already married Paolino. However, all ends well when the Count consents to marry Elisetta.

Recommended recording: Overture, C-7194M (Milan Symphony Orchestra—Molajoli).

# CLEMENTI

MUZIO CLEMENTI, b. Rome, 1752. First impressed himself on the music world as a child prodigy of the piano. He eventually achieved considerable note as a piano virtuoso, and in Vienna in 1781 he entered into a "musical duel" with Mozart at the instigation of Emperor Joseph II. In 1782 he settled in England, where he became famous as a piano teacher (his pupils included J. B. Cramer and John Field) and as a manufacturer of pianos. He died in Evesham, England, in 1832.

As a virtuoso, Clementi is said to have been the "father of modern pianoforte playing." As a composer for the piano, he may also be said to have inaugurated a new era for piano composition. "His divination of the treatment most appropriate to the instrument," wrote Parry, "marks his sonatas as among the very first in which the genuine qualities of modern pianoforte music on a large scale are shown."

## PIANO MUSIC

### *Gradus ad Parnassum*

In 1817 Clementi composed a series of one hundred studies which he incorporated in a volume entitled *Gradus ad Parnassum*. It has frequently been averred that the art of modern piano-playing rests on this volume; to this day, piano students utilize it for the development of their technique. The eminent pianist Tausig said that Chopin's études and these studies of Clementi are the "only two works in musical literature which are entirely indispensable to the pianist."

### *Sonatas*

Clementi composed more than one hundred sonatas for the piano. Today, these are known almost exclusively to piano students, who find them inexhaustibly valuable in developing piano technique and style. Never included on concert programs, their importance is historical and pedagogical rather than artistic. Yet musicians have always praised them. Pratt speaks of their resourcefulness and nervous energy. Frederick Niecks looks upon them as Clementi's most "important poetic achievements, the works in which he has incorporated the greatest emotional intensity possible to him, and where the virtuoso contents himself with being the servant of the idea." Alfredo Casella finds them "grandiose and witty, tragic and serene."

The best of the Clementi sonatas, those that might even be gratefully exploited on concert programs, include the Op. 50, No. 3 entitled *Didone Abbandonata*, the G minor (No. 6), the E-flat major (No. 16), *La Chasse* (No. 20), the D minor (No. 63), and the G major (No. 64).

It is interesting that Mozart borrowed the opening theme of Clementi's B-flat major sonata for his Overture to *The Magic Flute*, a fact that so infuri-

ated Clementi that in all later editions of this sonata he boldly printed the fact that he had performed this work before Mozart and Emperor Joseph II ten years before Mozart's opera was composed.

Recommended recordings: B-flat major, *Friends of Recorded Music* 21-2 (Loesser); G minor, *Friends of Recorded Music*, 13-4 (Loesser); E-flat major, C-DB831 (Samuel); Sonata for Two Pianos, Nos. 1 and 2, in B-flat major, *Timely* 1304 (Castagnetta; Kaye).

## COPLAND

AARON COPLAND, b. Brooklyn, New York, 1900. A pupil of Rubin Goldmark, Victor Wittgenstein, and Nadia Boulanger. In 1925 he won the Guggenheim Fellowship, and in 1930 a \$5,000 RCA-Victor award for the *Dance Symphony*. He has been an influential figure in spreading the gospel of modern American music as a member of the board of directors of the League of Composers, as organizer of special concerts and festivals, as writer, and as lecturer. He has composed music for several important Hollywood films including *Of Mice and Men*, *Our Town*, and *North Star*.

EARLY in his career, Copland was strongly attracted to the jazz idiom. In works like *Music for the Theater* and the Piano Concerto he utilized jazz idioms with effectiveness and freshness. He then abandoned jazz for a neo-classic style. More recently, his music has been simplified and his musical material made more palatable for mass consumption. "We found," he explained in an interview, "we were getting too far away from the public, that we were being isolated. I myself turned to . . . a simpler approach and more appealing music. . . . I've tried to express what I wanted to say in terms as simple as I could." Music like the school opera *The Second Hurricane* and the orchestral *El Salón Mexico* prove that he can write music to appeal to large audiences at first hearing; and he does so without cheapening his ideas or "talking down" to his public. Regardless of what style he chooses, he has always had a fine feeling for form, a consummate compositorial technique, and a natural flair for orchestration. He may not always be original or creatively important, but he can usually write arresting music that attracts attention and frequently arouses pleasure.

### BALLET

#### *Billy the Kid*

Lincoln Kirstein, director of the Ballet Caravan, commissioned Copland to write this ballet. It was composed in five weeks during the summer of 1938, and was first performed in October 1938. The ballet treats the story of Billy

the Kid, a slick trigger man who lived by the code of the West and who, by the time he reached his twenty-first birthday, had shot a man for every year of his life. He met his doom at the home of his Mexican sweetheart, where he was ambushed by a one-time friend (now a sheriff) and his men, and shot to death while asleep.

An engaging orchestral suite—incorporating about two-thirds of the music of the ballet—has been prepared by Copland for symphony performances. It includes the following sections: The Open Prairie; Street in Frontier Town; Card Game at Night; Gun Battle; Celebration after Billy's Capture; the Open Prairie Again.

The music is notable for its simplicity, directness of speech, and native flavor. It employs famous cowboy tunes dexterously within the fabric of the composition, classics like *Git Along, Little Dogies*; *The Old Chisholm Trail*; *Old Paint*; and *The Dying Cowboy*.

## OPERA

### *The Second Hurricane*

In one act, libretto by Edwin Denby, first performed at the Henry Street Music School on April 21, 1937.

*The Second Hurricane* is the first American opera composed expressly for performance by boys and girls of school age. It was first performed on April 21, 1937 (by a cast of 150 children) at the Henry Street Music School in New York under the direction of Lehman Engel. The libretto was prepared by Edwin Denby.

The story is set "vaguely in the southern part of the United States. The first two scenes are laid in a town high school and radio station; the rest on a rise of ground of a waste country near a great river." The plot concerns four boys and two girls who accompany an aviator in bringing help and food to victims of a flood, and thus solve the problem of a labor shortage. The performance is unorthodox. No curtain is raised. The principal characters and the chorus file upon the stage and take their places; the chief characters stand with the chorus. The principal of the school comes on the stage, sees that everyone is in his place, then quietly announces to the audience: "We are going to perform a piece for you that is partly spoken and partly sung. There are two choruses: this one is supposed to be pupils of a high school—that one is supposed to be the parents. I myself am the principal of the school. The rest I guess you'll understand, but a few scenic deficiencies on our part you'll have to supply from your own imagination. First, though, there's an overture. The play doesn't start till after that."

In a survey of the opera in the *New York Times*, Howard Taubman analyzed the score as follows: "The score is divided into set numbers. Choruses and songs are treated as individual units. There is a ballet-pantomime describing what the children imagine rescue work to be like. The music is . . .

clear, dramatic, humorous, and simple enough for the children who are to perform it, but with the personality of the composer unmistakably discernible."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *El Salón Mexico*

The "*Salón Mexico*" is a famous dance-hall in Mexico City, frequented by Mexicans. When Aaron Copland visited Mexico in 1932 he was greatly intrigued by this dance-hall. "It wasn't the music that I heard there or the dances that attracted me," he has explained, "as much as the spirit of the place. In some inexplicable way, while milling about in those crowded halls, one felt a really live contact with the Mexican people. . . . I remember quite well that it was just at that moment that I conceived the idea of composing a piece about Mexico and naming it *El Salón Mexico*." The work was composed in the summer of 1934, but it was not scored until two years later. Its first performance took place in Mexico City in August of 1937. It has since been performed by major American orchestras, and has become one of the most frequently performed and popular of Copland's orchestral works.

In this work, Copland used native Mexican folk tunes as part of the texture of his composition. "My purpose was not merely to quote these tunes literally, but to heighten them without in anyway falsifying their natural simplicity. . . . I adopted a form which is a kind of modified potpourri in which Mexican themes, and their extensions, are sometimes inextricably mixed for the sake of conciseness and coherence."

Recommended recording: VM-546 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

### *Music for the Theater*

In this early work of Copland—it was composed in May 1925—jazz is used with remarkable effect. Copland explains that in writing it he had "no play or literary idea in mind. . . . The title simply implies that, at times, this music has a quality suggestive of the theatre."

The suite is divided into the following sections: Prologue, Dance, Interlude, Burlesque, and Epilogue. *Music for the Theater* was introduced by the Boston Symphony under Koussevitzky in 1925.

Recommended recording: VM-744 (Eastman-Rochester Symphony Orchestra—Hanson).

# CORELLI

ARCANGELO CORELLI, b. Fusignano, Italy, 1653, a pupil of Bassani. He won fame as a violin virtuoso, touring Italy, Germany, and France, and becoming the first professional concert violinist in history. In 1700, he was appointed leader of the opera band in Rome. He was greatly honored both as composer and as violinist. He died in Rome in 1713.

CORELLI was the first great composer to devote himself to the writing of music for the violin. Thus he played three major roles in musical history: as the father of the violin sonata, as the founder of a school of violin composers that included Viotti, Veracini, and Geminiani, and as an influential pioneer in developing the concerto grosso form.

Of his compositorial style Parry wrote: "Corelli's methods are ostensibly contrapuntal, but it is noteworthy that his is not the old kind of counterpoint, but rather an artistic treatment of part-writing, which is assimilated into chords whose progressions are adapted to the principles of modern tonality. He uses sequences for the purposes of form, and modulations for the purposes of contrast and balance, and cadences to define periods and sections, and other characteristic devices of modern art."

## CONCERTOS

It is in the Opus 7 of his instrumental sonatas that Corelli proves himself an early master of the concerto grosso. The model he established in this opus was the one that Geminiani, Vivaldi, and Handel were later to employ. He established the instrumentation of the orchestral concerto, and his use of light and shade to give contrasted colors to the principal themes became one of the recognizable features of the concerto grosso form. In Corelli's hands it took shape as a work which first set an independent group of solo instruments against the *tutti* (the entire orchestra) and then combined the two in impressive and powerful climaxes. The Corelli concerto grosso is the parent of the concerto for solo violin and orchestra by Tartini, Vivaldi, Handel, and Bach.

### *Christmas Concerto*

One of the most famous of Corelli's concerti grossi is the one in G minor, Op. 6, No. 8, known as the *Christmas Concerto*. Forkel informs us that in this work Corelli attempted to give a musical depiction of the Nativity with angels hovering over the town of Bethlehem. The Concerto opens with an orchestral *tutti*. After a half dozen bars of a vigorous Vivace there comes a deeply felt Grave movement. A sprightly Allegro follows, in which solo instruments are permitted to express their individuality. A beautiful Adagio is momentarily interrupted by a spirited Allegro, but returns to reestablish the mood of spiritual exaltation that had previously been set. Two movements, reminiscent of



old dances, bring the work to its closing section, a Pastorale which is often interpreted as a musical setting for the birth of Christ. Eloquent in its simplicity, and touching in its religious feeling, it is the spiritual godfather of another symphonic piece describing Christ's birth—the "Pastoral Symphony" from Handel's *Messiah*.

Recommended recording: VM-600 (London Symphony—Walter).

## SONATAS

The sonata for violin and piano owes its early growth to the Opus 5 of Corelli's instrumental sonatas. In this work he emancipated the violin, taught it to speak its own melodic language with richness and variety. The bow arm was given greater flexibility and resilience. Particularly noteworthy is Corelli's beautiful writing of slow movements for the violin—teaching the violin the art of singing. In all the slow movements in later violin sonatas, we can perceive that a lesson has been learned from Corelli's lyric writing. His sonatas exerted a powerful historical influence, and were directly responsible for the creation of a school of composers of violin sonatas including Tartini, Geminiani, and Vivaldi, all of whom were to enrich the literature of violin music and to prepare the ground for Handel and Bach.

The famous *La Folia*, which has acquired permanency in the violin repertoire, is the twelfth sonata in Opus 5. It is, of course, not a sonata—though Corelli called it such—but a set of charming variations on a theme of Spanish origin. *La Folia* has been orchestrated by Max Reger.

Recommended recordings: Sonata No. 5 in G minor, orchestra by Filippi, C-69633 (C.B.S. Orchestra—Barlow); Sonata No. 8 in E minor, C-69152 (Renardy); *La Folia*, CX-202 (Szigeti).

# CORNELIUS

PETER CORNELIUS, b. Mainz, 1824. Studied under private teachers. In 1845, he settled in Berlin where his contacts with its artistic and musical life influenced his direction and purpose. He later became a friend of Liszt and Berlioz, both of whom were impressed by his talent. For a while he worked with Liszt in Weimar. After Liszt's withdrawal from that city, Cornelius settled in Vienna. In 1865 he was appointed to the faculty of Munich Conservatory. He died in Mainz in 1874.

A ROMANTIC composer, Cornelius was capable of writing music endowed with rare feeling and beauty of expression. He has not deserved the obscurity in which he worked during his lifetime and to which he was more or

less relegated after his death. Some of his songs rank with the best in German song literature, and his opera *The Barber of Bagdad* is a gem of wit.

## OPERA

### *The Barber of Bagdad*

In two acts, book by the composer, first performed at the Hoftheater in Weimar on December 15, 1858.

In 1854, Cornelius came to Weimar to do little musical jobs for Liszt, who was then occupying the post of Kapellmeister. It was during this period that a sprightly idea occurred to Cornelius for a comic opera. He confided his plans to Liszt, who tried to dissuade him from using a book so trivial in character. But Cornelius was deaf to advice, wrote a libretto, and then proceeded to compose his score. When he played portions of his opera for Liszt, the master recognized that its music was so charming and deft that the work—in spite of its relatively worthless text—had artistic importance; and he decided to produce the work at the Weimar Hoftheater. Unfortunately, there was in Weimar at the time a cabal to overthrow Liszt. It was owing to this cabal—not because of the opera itself—that the first performance of *The Barber of Bagdad* was a fiasco. The consequence of the hostile demonstration during that performance was that Liszt abandoned his Weimar post.

*The Barber of Bagdad* was never again performed during Cornelius's lifetime. In 1885, however, it was revived in Munich with great success. It was introduced at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York in 1890 under Anton Seidl. It has since then proved extremely popular in European opera houses.

The theme of the opera is slight. Nourreddin is in love with the Caliph's daughter, Morgiana, with whom he has a rendezvous. His friend, a barber, stands watch for him outside the palace. Mistaking the shouts of a beaten servant for his friend's cries for help, the barber forces his way into the palace. Nourreddin, believing the barber to be the Caliph, hides in a chest. The Caliph arrives on the scene, discovers the hidden Nourreddin (who nearly suffocates), and finally consents to the marriage of his daughter to her lover.

Of the music, R. A. Streatfeild wrote: "The beauties of the score are doubly astonishing when it is remembered that when it was written *Die Meistersinger* had not been composed. The germ of much that delights us in Wagner's comic opera may be found in *The Barber*. . . . The plot is long-winded and puerile, and the interest is entirely centered in the music. . . . Cornelius had a pretty gift for humorous orchestration, and his accompaniments often anticipate the dainty effects of *Die Meistersinger*."

The most important sections in the opera are the brilliant overture to Act I; the duet for soprano and tenor "*O holdes Bild*," also from Act I; and the polyphonic chorus in the Finale of Act II.

## SONGS

Lawrence Gilman wrote as follows about Cornelius's songs. "His world . . . is a world of ineffable and melancholy twilight, remote, mysterious, dream-haunted. There are moments when he seems immeasurably distant, wrapped in a shimmering, impenetrable mist of dreams, but even as you would strain your senses to follow him, he is standing beside you again, smiling that infinitely winsome smile of his and talking to you. . . .

"Those songs which most justly represent him—such as *Angedenken*, *Trauer*, *Ein Ton*, *An den Traum*, *Auftrag* . . . are the articulate and striving documents of one to whom 'upon the public ways life came.' He has not told us all that, perhaps, he might have told us; but it is something to have borne witness, as he indubitably has, to so much that is of enduring validity and beauty."

Cornelius also composed many exquisite Christmas songs.

## COUPERIN

FRANÇOIS COUPERIN, known as Couperin-le-Grand to distinguish him from the others of his family who for two centuries served French music, b. Paris, 1668. He entered the King's service in his twenty-fifth year, becoming soon afterwards organist of the Chapel Royal. At the height of his career he was music master to Louis XIV. He died in Paris in 1733.

As music master to Louis XIV, Couperin composed *Concerts royaux* which were performed at Versailles every Sunday by an instrumental ensemble with Couperin at the harpsichord. These *Concerts royaux* constitute the first successful effort by a French composer to write instrumental music in the style of Corelli. But Couperin's greatest importance lies in his harpsichord pieces, because of which he has been justifiably designated the "father of French piano music."

## PIANO MUSIC

*Pièces de clavecin*

Couperin composed four volumes of *Pièces de clavecin*—pieces for the harpsichord—which contain some of the most indestructible gems created for the harpsichord. In their variety of style, structural perfection, aptness of musical expression, richness of atmosphere, and technical self-assurance they are

unique in the early literature for harpsichord. They are more than this, too: by their successful transmutations into tone of pictures, suggestions, personalities, customs, objects, and incidents, Couperin has provided in these pieces a musical cross-section of French court life in the eighteenth century.

Couperin's little pieces for the harpsichord are programmatic. He has given them picturesque titles and has had the music interpret the titles. "In composing," he wrote in the preface of his first volume, "I have always a particular subject before my eyes. Various circumstances always suggest to me this, and also my titles." He has written pieces about butterflies, bees, roses, reapers, windmills—piquant, brilliant, apt musical depictions.

Thus Couperin was the first French composer to give programmatic titles to his works. But, more important still, he was the first French composer to write really effectively for the harpsichord, understanding its every potentiality for artistic expression, exploiting its capacity for harmonic colors and lyric singing.

In a revealing interview, Wanda Landowska discussed at length the genius of Couperin in these morsels for the harpsichord. "Couperin created a style and technique of his own," said the celebrated harpsichordist. "Like Chopin, Couperin is great not only for what he brings to his instrument by way of creative gifts, but also in what he draws from it. The resources of the instrument are wonderfully extended and immeasurably enriched by this early French master, who must be considered one of the earliest great composers of the keyboard. . . . One finds in his pieces for the harpsichord that sustained and full lyric line, those strong and appealing harmonies, that intensity of expression, that richness of atmosphere, all of which are qualities belonging uniquely to him.

"The gems are particularly memorable: *Les Moissonneurs*, a peasant gavotte, lusty, energetic, vital, with a great wealth of rhythmic treatment. . . . *Les Langueurs tendres*, a poignantly expressive work in which we find a new example of that melodic line which is prolonged, uninterrupted, swollen with thought and ideas, always reinforced with suave harmonies. Those exquisite rondos, matchless for their structural perfection and always touching with feeling and tenderness—such as *La Tendre fanchon* and *La Soeur Monique*."

Recommended recording: A collection of pieces from the four volumes, Couperin Society Album, (Landowska).

# CRAMER

JOHANN BAPTIST CRAMER, b. Mannheim, 1771, but brought up in England. He was a pupil of Clementi, then toured Europe as a piano virtuoso. In 1813, he became one of the founders of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of London, serving as one of its conductors, and as a frequent piano soloist. He also distinguished himself as a professor at the Royal Academy of Music, and as a publisher of music. He died in London in 1858.

It is curious indeed that, though Cramer wrote over one hundred sonatas for the piano, seven concertos for piano and orchestra, and numerous other works for solo piano and for chamber music ensembles, he is remembered today exclusively for his volume of piano studies.

## PIANO MUSIC

### *Etudes*

Cramer composed his famous studies (or *études*) for the piano in 1804. These studies have since become an all-important preparation ground for piano students. Beethoven thought highly of them. "Our master," Schindler has recorded, "declared that these *études* were the chief basis of all genuine playing." Yet it would be a mistake to regard them exclusively as good pedagogical material. "In pianoforte music," wrote Alexander Brent-Smith, "there is a beautiful district unknown to concert-goers but highly appreciated by all pianists—the district of Cramer. . . . All of his studies have a great technical value, and many have, in addition, considerable musical beauty. We might even go so far as to say that one or two are not unworthy to stand in the company of the preludes of Bach, such as the study in D major, with its rippling demi-semiquavers; the vigorous two-part study in C minor; and the loveliest of all, the study in A minor. Each of these is so essentially pianistic that it would perish if dissociated from the pianoforte."

Dannreuther has described many of these *études* as "poems," in the same class as Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words*.

# DEBUSSY

CLAUDE DEBUSSY, b. Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 1862. Was a pupil at the Paris Conservatory. In 1865, he won the Prix de Rome. He first attracted attention with his Quartet, composed in 1893. This was followed by a series of masterpieces in which Debussy's unique style was fully crystallized. In the closing years of his life he suffered from an incurable disease, and he died in Paris in 1918.

DEBUSSY's artistic career can be roughly divided into three periods. The first was that of apprenticeship, which produced some of his songs and choral works, compositions uneven in their quality, but at their best suggestive of greatness to come. It was when Debussy came into contact with the Symbolists, and was influenced by them, that he achieved artistic maturity. He applied their theories to music, and in developing these he achieved a subtly impressionistic art. In his hands the whole-tone scale became a remarkably flexible and varied instrument. He was able to produce chords of the most delicate and exotic quality, strange and haunting melodic lines; piquant atmospheres; exquisite effects. At the same time, in his orchestral music he achieved new sonorities and timbres, sometimes of the most tender fragility, sometimes of unequaled sensuousness. In the series of masterpieces which Debussy wrote at this time—during his second period—he succeeded in bringing the most subtle suggestions into music. His third period was marked by a general weakening of his artistic powers, in which more often than not he was reduced to imitating his earlier music.

"Debussy accomplished a complete revolution in musical art," wrote Henri Prunières. "He ended the reform in harmony that Chabrier, Lalo, Gabriel Fauré had begun; he invented new ways of associating chords hitherto regarded as discords, and used them to produce exquisite and delightful harmonies, and he disengaged the separate timbres of the orchestra by making one accentuate the value of another, instead of combining them in confused masses. In this respect, his method is that of an impressionist painter who lays on his canvas primary colors, side by side, instead of mixing them on his palette. Debussy violated all conventional formulas, replacing them by new ones no less beautiful and far more suitable for expression of those transient sensations and delicate emotions which he loved above all to portray. He was the incomparable painter of mystery, silence, and the infinite, of the passing cloud, and the sunlit shimmer of the waves—subtleties which none before him had been capable of suggesting. His power of expression is not less real for being always restrained and intolerant of excess and overemphasis, but its force is under the surface."

## OPERA

### *Pelléas et Mélisande*

In five acts, dramatic poem by Maurice Maeterlinck, first produced at the Opéra-Comique in Paris, on April 30, 1902.

*Pelléas et Mélisande*, one of the milestones in the evolution of opera, was ten years in the writing. Just before it was introduced in 1902, a scandal arose. For Debussy had promised that Maeterlinck's common-law wife, Georgette Leblanc, should sing the principal soprano role; but Carré, manager of the Opéra-Comique, had instead given the role to the then unknown American soprano, Mary Garden. This decision aroused the wrath of Maeterlinck, who proceeded, in *Le Figaro*, to attack the opera and its forthcoming presentation. "This performance will take place against my will. . . . I can only wish that its failure may be resounding and prompt."

At its first public rehearsal on April 28, 1902, and then at its première on April 30, *Pelléas* bewildered and mystified its audiences. Here was an opera in which the aria was banished, to be supplanted by a declamation more akin to human speech; in which the orchestra painted an exotic and not easily comprehensible background; in which all was atmosphere and mood rather than action and pageantry. The audiences hissed and denounced it noisily. The critics were equally annihilating. "All I heard," wrote Leon Kerst, "—for even when you don't understand a thing you can't go to the theater without hearing something—well, all I heard was a series of harmonized sounds (I don't say harmonious) which succeeded one another, uninterruptedly, without a single phrase, a single motif, a single accent, a single form, a single outline. And to this accompaniment, unnecessary singers drone out words, nothing but words, a kind of long-drawn-out, monotonous recitative, unbearable, moribund!"

It was not until four years later that Paris appreciated the values of this masterpiece. It was repeated at the Opéra-Comique, this time to score a triumph. What Romain Rolland was soon to write was now generally accepted by musicians and critics: "The first performance of *Pelléas et Mélisande* . . . was a very notable event in the history of French music. . . . It may be looked upon as one of the three or four red-letter days in the calendar of our lyric stage."

Today our acceptance of *Pelléas* is whole-hearted, and there are few to deny its epochal significance. It freed opera of many of its stilted conventions, and gave the musical form a new lease upon life. It offered us new glimpses into a dazzling world of beauty formerly denied us. As Alfred J. Swan commented: "The best scenes in the opera hold out before us vistas of unearthly beauty, and a transcending wisdom begotten by the superb lines of Maeterlinck."

Debussy himself has explained his artistic purpose in his opera, in answer to those critics who denounced him violently: "I tried to obey a law of beauty which appears to be singularly ignored in dealing with dramatic music. The characters of the drama endeavor to sing like real persons, and not in an arbitrary language on antiquated traditions. Hence, the reproach leveled at my alleged partiality for monotone declamation, in which there is no melody. . . . To begin with, this is not true. Besides, the feeling of character cannot

be continually expressed in melody. Also, dramatic melody should be totally different from melody in general. . . . I do not pretend to have discovered anything in *Pelléas*; but I have tried to trace a path that others may follow, broadening it with individual discoveries which will, perhaps, free dramatic music from the heavy yoke under which it has existed for so long."

For plot, the opera utilizes a tragic situation that is familiar to us in the literature and legend of many countries. Golaud, son of King Arkel, discovers Mélisande sitting at a fountain. He falls in love with her and takes her to his castle as wife. His brother, Pelléas, succumbs to Mélisande's beauty, and they become lovers. When Golaud discovers their guilt he slays them both.

Recommended recording: Vocal and Orchestral Selections, VM-68 (Paris Opéra and Opéra-Comique Soloists, and Symphony Orchestra—Coppola).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune*

As perfect a work of art as Debussy was ever to realize, the *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* was inspired by the famous poem of Stéphane Mallarmé. An excellent résumé of the poem, which can serve as the program for Debussy's gem, is the following: "A faun is lying on the borderland of waking and sleeping in a grove. The atmosphere is palpitating with the golden mid-day heat of an Eastern day. He has seen some slender-limbed, light-footed nymphs flit by; he would perpetuate the lovely vision. But he asks himself, Am I in love with a dream? Fully awake, he begins to reflect and analyze. He dissects the sensations and emotions he has experienced; questions the truth of the dream; recalls it again and again. . . . His thoughts become exaggerated, distorted; his senses predominate. Delicate imagery had taken shape in his mind: had he seen a flight of swans? . . . The current of his ideas becomes more and more realistic; at last he imagines himself under the shadow of Etna with Venus in his arms. And while he is anticipating punishment for such desecration sleep visits his eyelids once more; he bids adieu to waking facts and reality and in the shades of oblivion he will go in rightful quest of the shadowy, vanished dream."

The principal theme of the *Prelude* is heard at the very opening of the work, a delicate theme for the flute. "One is immediately transported into a better world," writes Louis Laloy. "All that is leering and savage in the snub-nosed face of the faun disappears; desire still speaks, but there is a veil of tenderness and melancholy. The chord of the wood wind, the distant call of the horns, the limpid flood of harp tones, accentuate this impression. The call is louder, more urgent, but it almost immediately dies away, to let the flute sing again its song. And now the theme is developed; the oboe enters in, the clarinet has its say; a lively dialogue follows, and a clarinet phrase leads to a new theme which speaks of desire satisfied; or it expresses the rapture of



mutual emotion rather than the ferocity of victory. The first theme returns, more languorous, and the croaking of muted horns darkens the horizon. The theme comes and goes, fresh chords unfold themselves; at last a solo violoncello joins itself to the flute; and then everything vanishes, as a mist that rises in the air and scatters itself in flakes."

Debussy composed this work in 1892, and its first performance took place on December 23, 1894, Gustave Doret conducting the orchestra of the National Society of Music.

Recommended recording: V-6696 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

### *Iberia*

It is indeed curious that this—one of the most famous musical interpretations of Spain—was composed by one who never visited that country (unless a one-hour excursion to Saint-Sebastian can be construed as a visit). Yet so remarkably did Debussy utilize Spanish rhythms and melodic idioms, and so faithfully did his imagination reproduce for him a country rich in atmospheric colors, that his orchestral work remains a brilliant tonal picture of Spain. It is in three sections, entitled respectively: I. In the Streets and Wayside; II. The Perfumes of the Night; III. The Morning of Fête Day. This is more graphic than most of Debussy's works, less concerned with subtle suggestions, and more with actual sights and sounds of Spain and descriptions of its gypsy-blooded people. So remarkably did Debussy fuse Spanish spirit and music in this work that (as no one less than Manuel de Falla pointed out) it exerted a far-reaching influence on the entire school of Spanish nationalist composers, Albéniz particularly.

Though *Iberia* is played independently on contemporary concert programs, it is actually the second in a set of three orchestral works collectively entitled *Images*. The first of this trio of works is entitled *Gigues*, and the last, *Ronde des Printemps*. *Iberia* was composed in 1909, and received its first performance at a concert of the Colonne orchestra on February 29, 1910.

Recommended recording: CM-491 (Pittsburgh Symphony—Reiner).

### *Nocturnes*

Three numbers make up Debussy's set of exquisite orchestral nocturnes: *Nuages* (Clouds); *Fêtes* (Festivals); *Sirènes* (Sirens). Debussy himself has provided the following program for this music: "The title *Nocturnes* is intended to have here a more general and, above all, a more decorative meaning. We, then, are not concerned with the form of the Nocturne, but with everything that this word includes in the way of diversified impression and special lights.

"*Clouds*: the unchangeable appearance of the sky, with the slow and solemn march of clouds dissolving in a gray agony tinted with white.

"*Festivals*: movement, rhythm dancing in the atmosphere, with bursts of

brusque light. There is also the episode of a procession (a dazzling and wholly idealistic vision) passing through the festival and blended with it; but the main idea and substance obstinately remain—always the festival and its blended music—luminous dust participating in the universal rhythm of all things.

"*Sirens*: the sea and its innumerable rhythm; then amid the billows silvered by the moon the mysterious song of the Sirens is heard; it laughs and passes."

Debussy composed his three Nocturnes between 1897 and 1899. The first two were introduced at a concert of the Lamoureux Orchestra, Chevillard conducting, on December 9, 1900; the third was first performed (together with the other two) at a Lamoureux concert on October 27, 1901. The *Sirènes* movement has the collaboration of a female chorus.

Recommended recording: VM-630 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

### *La Mer*

Debussy had an almost religious adoration of the sea. "Here I am again with my old friend the sea," he wrote to a friend, "always beautiful. It is truly the one thing in nature that puts you in your place; only you do not sufficiently respect the sea. To wet in it bodies deformed by the daily life should not be allowed; truly these arms and legs which move in ridiculous rhythms—it is enough to make the fish weep. There should be only Sirens in the sea. . . ."

In his musical apostrophe to the sea, Debussy did not intend to give a programmatic picture of the movements and tides of the sea. In three parts (I. From Dawn Till Noon on the Sea; II. The Play of the Waves; III. Dialogue of the Wind and Sea), this music is rather the reveries and emotions which the sea inspires in a poet sensitive to its varied beauties. It therefore puzzled the critics who heard it for the first time. "I neither hear, nor see, nor feel the sea," wrote Pierre Lalo.

Debussy composed this music between 1903 and 1905. It was completed on March 5, 1905, at a country place in Burgundy. "You will say," wrote Debussy to a fellow-musician, "that the ocean does not exactly wash the Burgundian hills . . . and my seascapes might be studio landscapes; but I have an endless store of memories and, to my mind, they are worth more than the reality." *La Mer* was introduced by the Lamoureux Orchestra on October 15, 1905.

Recommended recording: VM-643 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

## PIANO MUSIC

Debussy's contribution to twentieth-century piano music approximates Chopin's to that of the nineteenth. Though, apparently, all the resources of piano technique had already been explored by Chopin, Schumann, Brahms.

and Liszt, Debussy set about to uncover new colors and resonances, to acquire for that technique melodic and harmonic individuality. Though he was ceaseless in his search for the new, his music is eminently pianistic; for Debussy was an excellent pianist who knew his instrument well. It is probably in his piano music that he achieves his most sensitive speech. In his best piano works there are perhaps the aptest examples of his subtle powers of delicate suggestions. As Oscar Thompson wrote: "Finesse invariably takes precedence over muscularity. There is little or nothing that is genuinely heroic in Debussy's piano music. . . . For Debussy, the piano is a confidant, not a herald. It insinuates much; it never proclaims; there are times when it characterizes, even caricatures. But it does not dramatize, in the Lisztian sense."

### *Children's Corner*

Only a man who loved children's books, pictures, and fairy-tales as Debussy did could write for children so ingratiatingly, without any condescension. To write children's pieces is an art which only a scattered handful of composers have been able to realize. It calls for simplicity and directness, and with these an understanding of child psychology. No one else succeeded so happily in projecting himself into the child's world of fantasy and fact as did Debussy in these pieces; at the same time he achieved an artistic entity.

Debussy composed it between 1906 and 1908 for his little daughter, whom he nicknamed Chou-Chou. To the entire suite, and its component parts, Debussy gave English titles, possibly to suggest the games that an English governess plays with a French child. The suite includes the following pieces: I. *Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum*—a witty and satiric morsel describing a child's first struggles with Clementi's exercises; II. *Jimbo's Lullaby*—Jimbo (Debussy's misspelling of the name of Barnum's elephant) is a toy elephant, whom a child is crooning to sleep; III. *Serenade for the Doll*; IV. *Snow Is Dancing*—a delicate description of the falling of snow as a child watches it from a window; V. *The Little Shepherd*—an exquisite little character portrayal; VI. *Golliwogg's Cakewalk*—Debussy's use of an American popular dance idiom, the cakewalk, is rhythmically exciting.

Recommended recording: C-68962-3D (Gieseking).

### *Images*

Debussy composed two sets of *Images* for the piano, the first dating from 1905. "I think I may say without undue pride," he told his publisher, "that I believe these three pieces will live and will take their place in piano literature . . . either to the left of Schumann . . . or the right of Chopin." Strong words of self-praise which might seem effrontery if time had not more or less confirmed the opinion. Certainly, the first of the three *Images*, *Reflets dans l'eau*, is one of the masterpieces of piano literature—a delicate and fanci-

ful tone picture in a setting of cameo-like perfection; it represents the quintessence of Debussy's impressionist writing. The second number, *Hommage à Rameau*, is Debussy's tribute to Rameau in particular, and to French music of the past in general. André Saurès considered this "the most beautiful piece for the piano . . . since the last three sonatas of Beethoven." The final number is a perpetual motion entitled *Mouvement*, generating joviality and exuberance.

The second set of *Images* was composed two years after the first. It includes: I. *Cloches à travers les feuilles*—the sound of bells heard floating through the treetops; II. *Et la lune sur le temple que fût*, whose title was suggested by Louis Laloy after the music had been written; III. *Poissons d'or*—a sensitive piece of pictorial writing which Vallas informs us was inspired by a piece of oriental lacquer.

Recommended recordings: *Reflets dans l'eau*, C-68575D (Gieseking); *Mouvement*, C-17218D (Gieseking); *Cloches à travers les feuilles*, C-17218D (Gieseking); *Poissons d'or*, C-69020D (Gieseking).

### *Preludes*

Debussy's two books of Preludes, composed between 1910 and 1913, include some of his greatest works for the piano. The preludes are brief pictures, each built out of a fragmentary musical figure which grows and develops into a complete and integrated artistic conception. They are improvisational in character. These preludes—each with its own descriptive title—convey moods, atmospheres, and the subtlest suggestions of Nature. Guido M. Gatti is of the opinion that while the first book is superior from the point of view of musical content, the second marks an advance in Debussy's technical means. The most famous of the preludes include *Voiles*; *Les Sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir*; *Des Pas sur la neige*; *La Fille aux cheveux de lin* (famous as well in its transcription for violin and piano); *La Cathédrale engloutie*; and *Minstrels*—all from Book I; and *La Puerto del vino*; *Bruyères*; and *Feux d'artifices* from Book II.

Recommended recordings: CM-352, 382 (Gieseking).

## QUARTET

### *Quartet in G minor*

The first of Debussy's compositions to mark him as a genius was his String Quartet, Op. 10, composed in 1893—a work whose integration and complete realization of Debussy's style amaze us when we recall that he composed it in his twenty-first year. In an illuminating passage, Paul Dukas wrote: "Debussy's Quartet bears the definite stamp of his manner. Everything is clear and concisely drawn, although the form is exceedingly free. The melodic

essence of the work is concentrated, but of a rich flavor. It impregnates the harmonic tissue with a deep, original poetic quality. The harmony itself, although greatly daring, is never rough or hard. Debussy takes particular delight in successions of rich chords that are dissonant without being crude, and more harmonious in their complexity than any consonances could be; over them his melody proceeds as on a sumptuous, skilfully designed carpet of strange coloring that contains no violent or discordant tints."

The Quartet is in four movements. The first, *Animé et très décidé*, is introduced by a strongly accented subject which is contrasted by a second theme of haunting sweetness. In the second movement, *Assez vif et bien rythmé*, the first subject of the preceding movement reappears in a faster tempo and altered rhythmically (viola). In the Andantino, Debussy achieves an expression of gentle melancholy as the strings are muted; while the fourth movement, *Très modéré*, is vigorous.

Recommended recording: CM-467 (Budapest Quartet).

## SONGS

Oscar Thompson has written that "if Debussy had been almost exclusively a composer of songs . . . he still would have been one of the most distinctive and individual figures in music. The essence of Debussy's musical personality is in his songs and they exhibit virtually every facet of his art. There is nothing else like them in song literature. . . . Among song composers of all lands, Debussy was one of the most personal. He achieved a new style in the setting of poetry and poetic prose. In it was a new sensitivity to fantasy and the shadow moods. . . . If the first songs suggest Massenet or Borodin, and the *Cinq Poèmes de Baudelaire* yield echoes of Wagner, the *Ariettes oubliées* are indisputably Debussyan. The two series of *Fêtes Galantes*, the *Chansons de Bilitis*, and the *Proses lyriques* possess an individuality to set them apart in song literature. There are several appreciable changes of style between the Baudelaire songs of 1887-89 and the *Trois Poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé* of 1913, but they are all different facets of the same distinctive musical personality. . . . With a few exceptions . . . these are all songs of fantasy. Theirs is an unreal world, not a mere garnishment of reality; a world that is moonstruck and peopled with lunambulists; a world more often melancholy than happy, though frequently animated; a world that loves shadows and the dusk and shuns the noonday sun. An exquisite tenderness pervades it, companioned by irony and a recurring sense of futility and desolation. There is humor, occasionally hearty as in *Chevaux de bois* . . . or humor full of the tragic mockery of life, as in *Ingenus*. . . . The epigrammatic quality of the poem and the musical commentary are closely interwoven in such songs as *Colloque sentimental*, *Le Faune*, and *Fantoches* wherein Debussy contrives to overlay sentimentality with a patina of worldly wisdom. There is a twanging irony in the song *Mandoline*, as there is in the somewhat parallel piano

piece, *Sérénade interrompue*. Humor is latent, elsewhere, in many unexpected passages. But there is no unbuttoned laughter."

Recommended recording: "A Debussy Song Recital" (including *Trois Chansons de Bilitis*, *Le Promenoir des Deux Amants*, *Fêtes Galantes*, etc.) VM-322 (Maggie Teyte; Cortot).

## DELIBES

LÉO DELIBES, b. St. Germain du Val, 1836. Studied at the Paris Conservatory, following which he turned to the composition of operas. As chorusmaster at the Paris Opéra he attracted the attention of Perrin, who commissioned him to compose music for a ballet entitled *La Source*. The success of *La Source* encouraged Delibes to compose other ballet music, and in this field he achieved renown. He also wrote operas, scoring great success with *Le Roi l'a dit* and *Lakmé*. In 1884 he became a member of the Institut, following an appointment as professor of composition at the Conservatory. He died in Paris in 1891.

THOUGH Delibes wrote some highly creditable operas, of which *Lakmé* still retains its popularity in the opera houses of the world, his major importance in music has been in the field of the ballet. He was the first composer to treat music for the ballet seriously, and thus to open up a branch of composition which was later to be enriched by composers like Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky, and Ravel. As Jean Poueigh wrote: "In a class of composition which until then had been neglected, he brought an elevation and vigor of style, a fullness of forms and a richness of instrumentation unknown before him. . . . He introduced symphonic music into the ballet, at the same time remaining truly French and preserving in choreographic music that nimble elegance, that caressing grace, that spiritual vivacity, which are like wings of the dance."

Emile Vuillermoz thus summarized Delibes's importance: "Delibes is the great forerunner of the 'artist writer' from which our modern school has evolved. It is he who has given to our musicians the taste to dispose the notes of a chord, the timbre of an orchestration, the voices of an ensemble, with an attentive ingenuity which multiplies discoveries with each measure. His influence . . . [has] been decisive on the musicians of our time."

### BALLETS

#### *Coppelia*

In two acts and three scenes, book by C. Nuitter and A. Saint-Léon, first produced at the Paris Opéra on May 25, 1870.

Delibes was commissioned to compose music for the ballet *Coppelia* in

1870. Based upon Hoffmann's tale *The Sandman*, the ballet *Coppelia* is probably the first ballet in which a doll comes to life.

Frantz falls in love with a beautiful girl seated at the window of Coppélius's house. Frantz thinks the girl is Coppélius's daughter; actually she is a doll, a mechanical contrivance created by Coppélius. Swanilda, sweetheart of Frantz, realizes that his love has strayed, but is consoled when—finding a key to Coppélius's house—she discovers that Frantz's beloved is only a mechanical doll. Frantz protests to Coppélius his love for the lovely vision at the window, and the man now tries—successfully through magic—to bring the doll to life. The doll becomes human but to his consternation gets out of control. Eventually when Frantz realizes that Coppelia is only a doll, he and Swanilda are reconciled and married.

The ballet was a great success at its first performance at the Paris Opéra, and Delibes's music particularly impressed the audience and critics. The *Figaro* critic wrote that Delibes "has composed . . . a distinguished, piquant, and colorful score, excellently orchestrated."

One of the significant contributions of this ballet was the introduction of a folk dance in a ballet, when, in Act I, Swanilda dances a Czardas. Thus it successfully set the precedent for including folk dancing within the framework of ballets, a practice extremely popular with ballet composers after Delibes.

Discussing *Coppelia*, Carl Van Vechten wrote: "It is a model of conciseness, witty music, and spirit and refined melody. There are, to be sure sentimental passages, but on the whole Delibes is less sentimental than Gounod. His tunes usually move at brisk pace. They have all the luster of a polka by Offenbach and something more in the way of glamour."

Recommended recording: Prelude, Mazurka, Andante and Valse Lente, Ballade, Scène, and Valse de la Poupée, C-P17128-9D (Symphony Orchestra—Ruhlmann).

## OPERA

### *Lakmé*

In three acts, book by Edmond Goudinet and Philippe Gille, first performed at the Opéra-Comique in Paris on April 14, 1883.

The libretto is based on a poem of Edmond Goudinet, *Le Mariage de Loti*. It concerns the beautiful daughter of a Hindu priest—her name is Lakmé—who falls in love with a British soldier, Gerald. Gerald first sees Lakmé, and falls passionately in love with her, when he trespasses upon the holy temple grounds, punishment for which is death. Footprints betray his indiscretion to the high priest, Nilakantha, Lakmé's father. When Lakmé refuses to reveal the identity of the transgressor, the priest decides to discover the latter's identity through strategy. At a religious festival attended by British soldiers, he has Lakmé sing the *Bell Song*. Gerald's emotions on hearing her sing betrays him, and the priest stabs him in the back. But Gerald does not die; he is hidden in the woods, where Lakmé, through her use of secret herbs, helps to heal

him. They swear eternal love to each other, and they decide to seal their pledge with the drinking of a love potion. While Lakmé is away preparing it, Gerald's friend arrives to tell him that he is wanted at once by his regiment. Military duty clashes with his love for Lakmé, and duty conquers. When Lakmé returns to find she is to be abandoned, she takes poison, dying in her lover's arms.

If Delibes's score lacks dramatic fire, that fault is more than compensated for by his grace, charm, and melodic sensuousness. It is an exquisite cameo. As Julien Tiersot said of the opera: "The music of *Lakmé* resembles one of those exotic jewels with which women love to adorn themselves. It is beautifully wrought." Its melodic and harmonic appeal remain potent today. It is rich in exotic flavors, and recreates the colorful backgrounds of the play with strikingly brilliant music.

As is to be expected from a great composer of ballets, some of the most forceful and original pages in the score are those devoted to the ballet: the exotic Terana and Rektah, and the Persian Dances. Besides these, the best moments in the opera include the opening prayer scene, the soprano aria "*Pourquoi dans les grands bois*," and the duet for soprano and tenor "*C'est le Dieu de la jeunesse*," from Act I; the soprano aria known as the "Bell Song," and the duet for soprano and tenor "*Dans la forêt*," from Act II; and the cantilena for tenor "*Ah, viens dans la forêt profonde*," from Act III.

Recommended recordings: "*Blanche Dourga*," V-12136 (Korjus; Orchestra and Chorus); "*Pourquoi dans les grands bois*," C-17314D (Pons); Ballet Music from Act II, C-P17142-3D (Symphony Orchestra—Inghelbrecht); "Bell Song," V-1502 (Pons).

## DELIUS

FREDERICK DELIUS, b. Bradford, England, 1863. Came to Florida in 1884 to superintend an orange grove, but instead devoted himself to musical pursuits. He later studied at the Leipzig Conservatory with Sitt, Jadassohn, and Reinecke. In 1899, he settled in Grez-sur-Loing, France, which was to be his home for the remainder of his life. It was there that he wrote his masterpieces. His fame was long in coming, but it was finally achieved through the missionary ardor of his disciples, the most fervent of whom has been Sir Thomas Beecham. In the closing years of his life, Delius was a victim of paralysis and blindness. He died at his home in Grez-sur-Loing in 1934.

DELIUS was one of the truly aristocratic musical voices of our time. His music, as this editor wrote, "is pictorial painting in tone produced by a poetical temperament—music highly sensitized, suffused with a tranquillity and repose which seem far removed from our time. Refinement of speech and delicacy of tone, restraint of emotion and fragility of construction are their



outstanding qualities. . . . There is an elusive quality to Delius's music, an almost amorphous quality, which makes it difficult to grasp at first hearing. Delius's music appears, at first, like a perfume—a fleeting sensory experience without body, shape, or substance, leaving behind it a blurred but pleasing memory. It is only upon intimate acquaintance that the subtle outlines of Delius's form become clearly perceptible, and that the remarkable construction of his works is disclosed in the fluid flow of the music. And it is only upon frequent hearing that the individual beauty of his message begins to exert a necromantic spell over the listener."

## OPERA

### *A Village Romeo and Juliet*

In a prologue and three acts, book by the composer, first performed in Berlin in 1907.

Delius, the impressionist poet, has here written a drama which is marked by a quiet intensity. There are no moving climaxes or stirring scenes; the entire work is sustained on an even level of beauty. This, undoubtedly, makes for bad theater; but the quality of Delius's music is so finely sensitized, that the opera remains one of the most moving written since Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. "There cannot be many scores in existence," wrote Bernard van Dieren, "which are so full of skilful ingenuity and dexterity of craftsmanship, combined with such felicity of invention, as Delius's *A Village Romeo and Juliet*. The average music-maker, when he looks at this strangely quiet work which burns with such white heat at the center, seems little else than a bewildering number of lost opportunities. He cannot believe that they could have been deliberately missed by a man who would be able to exploit them at all. At a hundred points there occur situations which, musically and dramatically, simply seem to clamor for the effective application of some standard expedients. But Delius, instead of writing the many pages which the barest routine would dictate to almost any composer, insists on making a fresh effort every time. He condenses the whole of his exquisite musical sensibility in a few brief phrases which owe nothing to the helpful formulae that, like so many faithful dogs, almost beg to be taken out for the occasion."

*A Village Romeo and Juliet* is based on a novel by Gottfried Keller. In a German village, a bitter feud estranges two families. The daughter of one falls in love with the son of the other. Because their families disapprove the match, they escape. On the road they meet a vagabond fiddler, who seeks to lure them to a life of abandoned pleasure. But they turn a deaf ear to him, and decide instead to fulfil their loves and their lives with death. They commit suicide on a river barge—their bridal bed becoming their grave.

The opera was composed by Delius in 1901, and it was given its first performance in Berlin where it was received with great enthusiasm. This marked

the beginning of a vogue for Delius in Germany, many years before it reached England. ("I never dreamt," said Richard Strauss, "that anybody except myself was writing such good music.") On February 22, 1910, it was introduced at Covent Garden under the baton of Sir Thomas Beecham, but it was hardly a success. It was revived ten years later at Covent Garden, again under Sir Thomas's baton, with greater critical than audience acclaim.

The intermezzo entitled *A Walk to the Paradise Garden* has become famous on symphony programs.

Recommended recording: *A Walk to the Paradise Garden*, C-67474D (Royal Philharmonic—Beecham).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Brigg Fair*

Percy Grainger rediscovered the old English folk song *Brigg Fair* which inspired Delius, in 1907, to compose his "English rhapsody." Dedicated to Grainger, the work was introduced in Liverpool on January 18, 1908.

The rhapsody opens with a slow pastoral section, following which we hear the folk song (oboe), the principal subject of the work. The song is elaborately developed. The entire composition has a pastoral quality of idyllic calm.

Recommended recording: CM-X30 (Royal Philharmonic—Beecham).

### *Dance Rhapsody, No. 1*

*A Dance Rhapsody* was composed in 1908, and on September 8, 1909, it was introduced at the Hereford Music Festival under the baton of the composer. Philip Heseltine has given an excellent analysis of this work: "After a quiet prelude, the chief dance theme is announced by the oboe; and save for a middle section, which is pervaded by echoes of the main theme, the whole work consists of repetitions of this one melody, with harmonic variations that are kaleidoscopic in their ever-changing tones and colors. The climax of the work is not dynamic, but comes at the music's ebb, a metamorphosis of the dance theme played by a solo violin against a background of divided strings—an indescribable passage, perhaps the most intense and exalted moment in all Delius's music. It has a beauty which is all the more poignant for its evanescence, and which blinds one to the fact that the tumultuous coda, though completely satisfying in conception, does not and cannot ever quite come out in performance."

### *In a Summer Garden*

Delius composed this tone picture in Grez-sur-Loing in 1908—an exquisite portrait of his own garden, aglow with varied colors. The music requires no program, but the composer appended to the published score two quotations

that throw light on the music's inner messages. The first is a couplet by Dante Gabriel Rossetti:

"All are my blooms; and all sweet blooms of love  
To thee I gave while Spring and Summer sang."

The other is an unidentified prose passage: "Roses, lilies, and a thousand scented flowers. Bright butterflies flitting from petal to petal, and gold-brown bees humming in the warm, quivering summer air. Beneath the shade of ancient trees, a quiet river with waterlilies. In a boat, almost hidden, two people. A thrush is singing in the distance. . . ."

Recommended recording V-9713-2 (London Symphony—Toye).

### *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring*

This is probably the most beautifully realized of Delius's tone pictures, exquisite in its perfection, sensitive in its etching of the most subtle atmospheres and suggestions of the countryside. It is believed that the inspiration of this piece is the countryside of Norway which Delius loved greatly. This possibility is confirmed by his interpolation of a Norwegian folk song, *In Ola Valley*, which is the second of the two subjects utilized; the first subject, a rustic theme in which can be heard the echoes of cuckoo calls, is of Delius's own composition. It has sometimes been said that in this piece Delius expresses his longings for the beauty of the Norwegian mountains.

Composed in 1912, the work was first performed by the Philharmonic Society of London on January 10, 1914, under the direction of William Mengelberg.

Recommended recording: C-67475D (Royal Philharmonic—Beecham).

### *Over the Hills and Far Away*

This beautiful tonal tribute to the beauties of Nature—painted by Delius with the deftest touch and with a translucent transparency of orchestra—was probably inspired by the Yorkshire moors. The mood of tranquillity which it creates is so easily understood and assimilated that we today can hardly believe that at its first performance the work was considered revolutionary. As a matter of fact, when it was played for the first time in Elberfeld (Germany) in 1897, the audience was so outraged by its unorthodoxy as to demand the removal of the conductor who introduced it. In 1899, *Over the Hills and Far Away* became the first Delius work to be performed in London—under the baton of Alfred Hertz, and it was more graciously received. Today we consider it the most easily appreciated of Delius's tone pictures, full of lovable thematic subjects which are developed with neatness and formality.

Recommended recording: CM-290 (Royal Philharmonic—Beecham).

# DOHNÁNYI

ERNST VON DOHNÁNYI, b. Pressburg, Hungary, 1877. Entered the Royal Academy of Music in 1894 where he became a pupil of Thomán and Koessler. He began his musical career as concert pianist. In 1908, he was appointed professor of piano at the Berlin Hochschule, and in 1919 he assumed the direction of the Budapest Conservatory. He also distinguished himself as a conductor.

IN his music, Dohnányi has revealed the profound influence that the works of Brahms exerted upon him. Like Brahms, he adheres to a strict form, and like Brahms he fills his form with music almost sensuous in character. Many of Dohnányi's melodic subjects bear a striking resemblance to the lyric style of Brahms. Never an original personality in his works, he has nevertheless written some charming music that has brought great pleasure to many concertgoers.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Ruralia Hungarica*

This work consists of five pieces which abound with characteristic Hungarian songs and dances, one of the few works by Dohnányi which are nationally inspired. The first piece (Andante poco moto) opens placidly before it erupts with uncontrolled Hungarian energy. The Presto ma non tanto exploits a gay and seductive folk tune sections of which are cleverly distributed among the different groups of the orchestra. The third piece, Allegro grazioso, has an infectious simplicity, while the section that follows (Adagio ma non troppo) is an expression of profound melancholy. The work ends with a brisk and vivacious dance melody that undergoes many transformations (Molto vivace).

*Ruralia Hungarica*, Op. 32b, was composed in 1924. Dohnányi also issued this work for solo piano, Op. 32a.

### *Suite for Orchestra*

This comparatively early work of Dohnányi, composed in 1911, is also his best known. It is melodious, ingratiatingly scored, and developed with a keen imagination. It is profoundly Brahmsian in its spirit and in the prevalence of melodies of sensuous character. Of Brahmsian scope and proportions, too, is the first movement, a set of variations on a delightful Andante subject (wood winds). There are six variations, sometimes buoyantly lyrical, sometimes cogent, sometimes passionate, which repeatedly remind us of Brahms's use of the variation form. The second movement is a Scherzo, the most original of the four. In the third movement, Romanza, we have the poetic composer musing gently and tranquilly in the manner of a Brahms slow movement. After three bars of introduction, the oboe sings a poignant melody,

to be answered later on by a second song, this time given to the 'cello. The work closes with a captivating Rondo, brilliant and vigorous in character.

Recommended recording: VM-47 (Chicago Symphony—Stock).

### *Variations on a Nursery Tune*

The tune that Dohnányi elaborates in this set of eleven variations for piano and orchestra (Op. 25) is "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep"—sometimes used for singing the Alphabet, and known also as *Ah, vous dirai-je, maman* in a set of variations by Mozart. Here the piano is used as an obbligato rather than as a solo instrument; it becomes a major voice of the symphonic choir, not an independent voice with symphonic accompaniment. The variations are in turn, lyrical, witty, charming, dignified. The seventh variation (a waltz) and the closing Chorale represent Dohnányi at his melodic best. Throughout the work the influence of Brahms is evident in the luscious melodies and harmonizations and in the sensuous appeal of the music in general.

Recommended recording: VM-162 (Dohnányi; London Symphony—Collingwood).

## DONIZETTI

GAETANO DONIZETTI, b. Bergamo, 1797. Was a student at the Conservatory of Naples, where he first came into contact with Rossini's music, which influenced him greatly. He later went to Bologna to study with Rossini's master, Mattei. In his first operas he was Rossini's imitator, but by 1832 he had fully assimilated Rossini's style and was able to endow it with original accents in his first great opera, *L'Elisir d'amore*. With *Lucia di Lammermoor*, composed in 1835, Donizetti became famous throughout Europe. Toward the close of his life he was subject to depressions and hallucinations, and was confined in an insane asylum. He was released in 1847, but he soon fell victim to a paralytic stroke. He died in his native city in 1848.

DONIZETTI was amazingly facile and spontaneous. Writing music came easily to him, and he rarely made corrections. He was able to work quickly. *Don Pasquale* was composed in eleven days; *Lucia*, in six weeks. Between 1831 and 1834 he composed eight operas, including *L'Elisir d'amore*. It is probably this very spontaneity and swiftness that makes so much of Donizetti's music superficial; certainly most of his nearly seventy operas have been forgotten. However, as Cecil Gray points out, "the fact remains that when he chose to take trouble he was capable of attaining remarkable heights." He had an innate gift for mobile and singable melodies, and these are abundant in his best operas. He wrote simply and unpretentiously, often with grace, verve, and genuine vitality.

## OPERA

*Don Pasquale*

In three acts, libretto by Salvatore Gammerano, first performed at the Théâtre des Italiens in Paris on January 4, 1843.

*Don Pasquale* is one of the masterpieces of opera-buffa. In lightness of touch, frothy humor, sprightliness, and pace it remains a model of what true opera-buffa should be.

It was in his comic operas—of which *Don Pasquale* and *Elisir d'amore* are the best—that Donizetti reached the heights of his creative powers. Here he was the disciple of Rossini, and Cecil Gray goes so far as to say that “in sparkle, brilliance, and comic verve they are scarcely, if at all, inferior to the *Barber* of Rossini on which they are obviously modelled.”

The story, set in Rome, revolves about the wealthy bachelor Don Pasquale, who violently opposes his nephew's marriage to Norina, a charming widow. The family physician praises the charm and magnetism of his “sister” (in order to dupe Don Pasquale) and urges Pasquale to meet her—the “sister” being Norina in disguise. She captures Pasquale's heart, and they are “married” by a false notary. No sooner is the mock ceremony performed, however, than Norina begins to drive Pasquale distracted with her extravagance and infidelities. Only after he has been made thoroughly miserable is he told the whole story of the hoax—and he is so relieved that he no longer withholds his consent to his nephew's marriage to Norina.

For some time after its first performance it was customary to present *Don Pasquale* in contemporary costume, but after a while—to give the opera greater charm and picturesqueness—eighteenth-century costuming was adopted.

Brockway and Weinstock have written that *Pasquale* “has its own unfailing brand of deliciousness. One of the most remarkable things about *Don Pasquale* is its unspoiled freshness. . . . It shares with the best comic works of the Italian school . . . a singular youthful quality on which the passive years have no effect. There is springtime in *Don Pasquale*, and though the music is undeniably thin, it is not so familiar as to be worn threadbare. In short, the charm persists. The chatter, saucy overture, a potpourri of good things from the opera, is Donizetti's most tolerable. . . . The bare-faced nonsense of the plot is matched by the high spirited often farcical numbers, reaching their most delicious absurdity in the prolonged quartet at the end of Act II.”

The most famous parts of *Don Pasquale* are the soprano aria “*So anch' io la virtù magica*” and the duet for soprano and baritone “*Pronta io son*” from Act I; the tenor aria “*Cherchero lontano terra*” from Act II; and the duet for tenor and bass “*Cheti, Cheti,*” the tenor serenata “*Com e gentil,*” and the nocturne for soprano and bass “*Tornami a dir che m'ami*”—all from Act III.

Recommended recording: VM-187 (La Scala chorus, orchestra, soloists—Sabajno).

*L'Elisir d'amore*

In two acts, libretto by Felice Romani, first performed at the Teatro della Canobbiana, Milan, on May 12, 1832.

This is the second of Donizetti's two great comic operas, and is musically not inferior to *Don Pasquale*. "Fresh, graceful, and occasionally tender," writes Streatfeild, "it forms the happiest contrast to the grandiose nonsense which the composer was in the habit of turning out to suit the vitiated taste of the day, and is a convincing proof that if he had been permitted to exercise his talent in a congenial sphere, Donizetti would be entitled to rank with the most successful followers of Cimarosa and Paisiello."

The story is built around a love potion which Nemorino buys to win the love of Adina, who favors Sergeant Belcore instead. Nemorino accordingly plans to give her a love potion, but is obliged to join the army in order to get money to pay for it—an act which convinces Adina of the depth of his love for her. She thereupon abandons the Sergeant and marries Nemorino.

The most famous single number in the opera is, of course, the tenor aria "*Una furtiva lagrima*" from Act II, with which Caruso always brought down the house. Other celebrated portions include the bass aria "*Udite, udite, o rustici*" from Act I; the duet for tenor and bass "*Venti scudi!*" and the soprano aria "*Prendi, per me sei libero*" from Act II.

Recommended recording: abridged, C-Opera Set 12 (La Scala Chorus, Orchestra, and Soloists—Molajoli).

*La Fille du Régiment*

In two acts, libretto by Saint-Georges and Bayard, first performed at the Opéra-Comique, Paris, on February 11, 1840.

This opéra comique, which happily combines French charm and lightness with Italian melody, was originally intended for a Naples première. But because Donizetti was in the bad graces of the Neapolitan authorities—largely owing to the political implications in his operas—*La Fille du régiment* was introduced in Paris. With Mme. Anna Thillon as Marie, the opera scored a great success, and ever since that time has been a favorite with coloratura sopranos.

The opera has frequently been adapted for the political situations of different eras. During the Civil War, Union zouaves appeared on the stage during a performance. When Frieda Hempel appeared in it at the Metropolitan in 1918, she interpolated into it, because of the war fever, a popular song—*Keep the Home Fires Burning*. And again, on December 28, 1940, Lily Pons draped herself not in the French tricolor but in the flag of the De Gaulle "Free French" as she sang *La Marseillaise* (which is in the opera).

Marie, an orphan girl, is found and adopted by a regiment of Napoleon's soldiers in Switzerland. She falls in love with a Tyrolean peasant,

Tonio, who has saved her life. The regiment is willing to give its consent to their marriage if Tonio agrees to join the French army. Tonio is about to marry Marie when the news comes that Marie is the niece of the Marchioness of Maggiorivogeo, who orders her to come home. She returns heartbroken, thinking only of Tonio. The aunt is about to arrange a marriage between Marie and a duke's son when—at the zero hour—Tonio, now an officer, arrives on the scene to claim his bride. Impressed by Tonio's love, the Marchioness gives her consent.

The best known numbers of the opera are the aria for soprano and chorus "*Chacun le sait*" and the soprano aria "*Il faut partir*" from Act I; the soprano aria "*Par le rang et par l'opulence*," the soprano "*Tyrolienne*," the tenor cavatina "*Pour me rapprocher de Marie*" and the final "*Salut à France*" for soprano, all from Act II.

Recommended recordings: Overture, C-DF425 (Vienna Symphony—Kerby); "*Chacun le sait*," C-71248D (Pons); "*Il faut partir*," C-71248 (Pons); "*Par le rang et par l'opulence*" C-71249D (Pons); "*Salut à France*," C-71249D (Pons).

### *Lucia di Lammermoor*

In three acts, libretto by Salvatore Cammarano, first performed at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples, on September 26, 1835.

*Lucia di Lammermoor*—in which so many of the great coloratura sopranos of the past century have sung—is Donizetti in a more serious and ambitious mood than when he writes his comic operas. Here is emphatically a lesser Donizetti, and a less appealing one. But *Lucia* is his best work in the serious vein, and its best pages are among the best in Italian operatic literature—the celebrated Sextet, for example, which Cecil Gray regards as "one of the finest examples of concerted vocal writing in the whole range of opera."

The text is based upon Walter Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor*. To revive the dissipated fortunes of his family, Henry Ashton arranges a match between his sister Lucy and Lord Arthur Bucklaw. Lucy, however, loves Edgar Ravenswood—who is absent on a mission in France—and swears loyalty to him. Ashton, who has been intercepting letters from Ravenswood to Lucy, shows her a letter he has forged in proof of Ravenswood's infidelity. Confronted with such evidence, she consents to marry Lord Arthur. The moment the marriage contract is consummated, Ravenswood returns suddenly from France and, faced with his loved one's patent disloyalty, curses the house of Lammermoor. On the night of her wedding, Lucy goes mad, kills her husband, and commits suicide. When Ravenswood hears of the tragedy, and realizes that his beloved was true to him, he kills himself in the tomb of his ancestors.

The best portions of *Lucia* are the soprano cavatina "*Regnava nel silenzio*" and the love duet for tenor and soprano, both in Act I; the Sextet and the Mad Scene, both from Act II; and the tomb scene from Act III.

Recommended recording: C-Opera Set 20 (La Scala Chorus, Soloists, Orchestra—Molajoli).



# DUKAS

PAUL DUKAS, b. Paris, 1865. Studied with Dubois and Guiraud at the Conservatory. In 1888 he won the Second Prix de Rome. He first attracted attention with a concert overture *Polyeucte*, performed in 1892. His *L'Apprenti Sorcier*, produced in 1897, brought him world fame. He died in Paris in 1935.

DUKAS's works are few in number, and of them only one—*The Sorcerer Apprentice* (*L'Apprenti sorcier*)—keeps him permanently on our symphony programs. He had a superb technique, polish, refinement, and a fine graphic sense. "Though modern," G. Jean-Aubry wrote of him, "his music escapes the unrest of our day. There is none more serene, in spite of its prodigious life. His pages reveal themselves to us in all the splendor of their freshness and assume already in some places the assuaging quality of the past."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *The Sorcerer Apprentice*

Dukas's masterpiece is based directly on a ballad by Goethe, *Der Zauberlehrling*, which is appended to the score. The Goethe ballad, in turn, is based on a famous folk tale.

*The Sorcerer Apprentice* tells of a magician who can transform a broomstick into an animate being and have it perform all his menial household tasks for him. The magician's apprentice one day overhears the magic formula with which the broomstick becomes alive, and tries to apply it himself in his master's absence. The broom is ordered to bring water from the well. It performs this routine mechanically and efficiently. When the apprentice tires of this game, he wants to transform the water-carrier back into a broomstick, but finds that he does not know the necessary formula. The enchanted stick continues to bring in bucket upon bucket of water until the room overflows. The apprentice passes from annoyance to despair. Fortunately, the sorcerer comes home, pronounces the magic words, the broom again becomes inanimate, and all is quiet again.

Dukas calls this work a "scherzo" not because it is scherzo in form, but because the original meaning of that term is "a joke." Dukas here shows an exceptional capacity to describe objects, people, and action with a few tones. His characterization of both the sorcerer and his apprentice are gems of brief and accurate delineation. The music so vividly portrays the details of the story that, once knowing it, we can readily trace its progress. The work opens with an air of mystery. A subdued theme for muted violins suggests the apprentice, and a brisk passage for wood winds recreates the sorcerer's incantations. As the music progresses we hear the broom going through its paces of fetching water precisely and mechanically (three bassoons voice the broom theme, a mocking subject); the apprentice's shrieks of terror; the return of

the sorcerer (a fortissimo in the brass), and the application of his magic words. The work ends, as it began, touched with mystery.

Recommended recording: VM-717 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

## DUPARC

HENRI DUPARC, b. Paris, 1848. After studying with César Franck, he became one of the founders of the Société Nationale de Musique. In 1885, he became a victim of a nervous ailment which compelled him to abandon all creative work and to retire to Switzerland. He died in Mont de Mersau, France, 1933.

A PASSIONATE disciple of Franck, Henri Duparc sought to express beauty as purely and simply as possible. He wrote with remarkable conciseness, exactitude of idiom, and a fine capacity to create tonal beauty. Franck considered him his most gifted pupil. Undoubtedly—on the basis of what he has written—the sickness which brought his artistic career to an end in his thirty-fifth year robbed the world of a major composer. As it is, he wrote a few songs which will live.

### SONGS

Duparc's name is prominent in French music by virtue of some sixteen songs—imperishable masterpieces all—composed before 1878. These few songs have tempted some critics to link Duparc's name with those of Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, and Hugo Wolf, as one of the great creative figures in the *Lied* form. Of these sixteen songs, the most famous include *L'Invitation au voyage*, *La Vague et la cloche*, *Extase*, *Lamento*, *Vie antérieure*, *Testament*, *Phidylé*, *Repos*.

In a discussion of Duparc's songs, Jean-Aubry wrote: "There is perhaps no expression more apt to throw light on the nature of Henri Duparc's work than the sentence in Baudelaire which says, 'I have found the definition of the beautiful. . . . It is something ardent and sad, something a little vague, leaving scope for conjecture.' For Henri Duparc beauty is of the same nature. It is something ardent and sad, but this ardor is not set free, this sadness is not spoken, but is exhaled with poignant simplicity. . . . He gives accents to his dreams by means of nuances. . . . Ordinarily his songs begin in a calm mood. There is the opening of *Phidylé*, marked 'slow and calm,' its chords gently modulating while the vocal phrases evolve 'softly and without nuances.' . . . There is the first phrase of *Extase* and the last of *Lamento*.

Devoid of artifice, this art thus attains to an amplitude that is scarcely met with in any other French Lied."

"There is in Duparc's songs," wrote Jean-Aubry in summation, "a modesty of expression and a discretion of accent. . . . He says what he wishes to say and travels no farther."

Recommended recordings: *Chanson triste*, V-18088 (Steber); *Extase*, V-15798 (Panzer); *L'Invitation au voyage*, V-18051 (Panzer); *Lamento*, V-16798 (Panzer); *Le Manoir de Rosemonde*, V-18052 (Frijs); *Phidylé*, C-LFX491 (Thill); *Sérénade Florentine*, V-15798 (Panzer); *Soupir*, V-1892 (Panzer); *Testament*, V-15799 (Panzer); *La Vague et la cloche*, V-15799 (Panzer); *La Vie antérieure*, V-18051 (Panzer).

## DVOŘÁK

ANTONIN DVOŘÁK, b. Nelahozevec, near Prague, 1841. Studied at the Prague Organ School. In 1873 he became an organist at the St. Adelbert Church, and in 1878 first achieved success as a composer with his *Slavonic Dances*. Through the efforts of Bülow, Liszt, Joachim, and principally Brahms, Dvořák's reputation spread throughout Europe. In 1892, he came to the United States to become director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York. In America he wrote some of his most famous works, utilizing the idiom of the American Negro. After returning to Prague, he was appointed director of the Prague Conservatory. He died of apoplexy in 1904.

IN his music, Dvořák was not aiming to develop a new speech or to strike new paths. What concerned him exclusively was writing music that should come from the heart and appeal to the heart—music of simplicity, sincerity, and beauty. His work is generally recognizable by its Slavic traits. Always heart and soul interested in Bohemian music, he has infused his compositions with national characteristics, made them speak for his people. The religious temper of his music, its color and temperament, its rhythms, and its closeness to the Czech soil are marked Slavic traits of his most important works. "His melody," wrote W. H. Hadow, "is often as simple and ingenuous as a folk song, but in polyphony, in thematic development, in all details of contrast and elaboration, his ideal is to organize the rudimentary life and to advance it into a fuller and more adult maturity."

### CONCERTOS

*Concerto in A minor for Violin and Orchestra*

*Concerto in B minor for 'Cello and Orchestra*

Dvořák introduced the concerto form in Czech music. As Vladimir Helfert wrote, "His violin concerto and his 'cello concerto . . . are the foundations

of the Czech traditions of instrumental concertos. . . . These . . . forms . . . gave Dvořák's genius the greatest freedom and the best opportunity to sing his beautiful, fluent melodies, and generally give play to his elemental urge."

Easy to listen to, full of a pleasing and ingratiating lyricism, Dvořák's concertos are well written for their respective solo instruments, and portray his romantic spirit to good advantage.

The Violin Concerto, Op. 53, composed upon Joachim's invitation, was written in 1880 at Prince Rohan's estate in Sychrov. Undoubtedly, Joachim suggested many stylistic changes, particularly in Dvořák's manner of writing for the solo instrument, and part of the grace with which the music lies on the violin fingerboard is due to Joachim's advice. In the autumn of 1883, Franz Ondříček introduced it in Prague.

The Violoncello Concerto, Op. 104, dates from Dvořák's period in America. It was composed in 1895, and was introduced at the London Philharmonic concerts, Dvořák conducting, with Leo Stern as soloist. Its American source is recognizable in the second subject of the first movement, which has the definite character of an American Negro melody.

Both concertos are rather rhapsodic in form, with a great amount of free writing in the manner of improvisation. They are at their best when Dvořák gives full expression to his melodic gifts, and in both concertos the most memorable movements are the two Adagios.

Recommended recordings: Concerto for violin and orchestra, VM-387 (Menuhin; Paris Conservatory Orchestra—Enesco); Concerto for 'cello and orchestra, VM-458 (Casals; Czech Philharmonic—Szell).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Carnival Overture*

The *Carnival Overture*, Op. 92, is one of a trilogy of overtures entitled *Triple Overture* and subtitled respectively "Nature," "Life," and "Love." The "Life" overture is now famous as *Carnival*. Dvořák provided the following program: "The lonely, contemplative wanderer reaches the city at nightfall, where a carnival of pleasure reigns supreme. On every side is heard the clangor of instruments, mingled with shouts of joy and the unrestrained hilarity of people giving vent to their feelings in their songs and dance tunes." Exuberant, vivacious, full of gusto, it is exciting music, full of Slavic flavors and colors. It was composed in 1891.

Recommended recording: V-12159 (Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler).

### *Slavonic Dances*

It was Johannes Brahms who, in 1878, impressed by Dvořák's talent, gave the younger composer an introduction to Brahms's own publisher, Simrock. Simrock told Dvořák that there might be a ready audience for a series of

Slavonic dances, comparable to the Hungarian dances which Brahms had made famous. Always profoundly interested in the native folk music of his country, Dvořák accepted the assignment eagerly. He collected a set of eight authentic Bohemian folk melodies and adapted them as Slavonic dances for four hands. So great was their success in the four-hand version (they popularized the name of Dvořák in the music world for the first time) that Simrock urged Dvořák to orchestrate them; and it is in their orchestral form that these *Slavonic Dances*, Op. 46, have become world-famous. Eight years later, Dvořák wrote a second set of *Slavonic Dances*, Op. 72, also in two versions—for four hands and for orchestra.

Recommended recordings: VM-345, 310 (Czech Philharmonic—Talich).

### *Slavonic Rhapsodies*

Dvořák's three *Slavonic Rhapsodies*, Op. 45, were composed in 1878, the year in which he wrote his famous *Slavonic Dances* for the publisher Simrock. Like the dances, they reveal both Dvořák's profound preoccupation with folk music and his aim of giving it artistic significance. Paul Stefan analyzes these rhapsodies briefly as follows: "The first, in D major, builds up an idyllic theme to grandiose heights, following an undisclosed program derived from heroic Czech sagas. This idyllic theme is interwoven with another suggesting a joyous knightly tournament in a delightful rondo. The second rhapsody, in G minor, has the same knightly character, with its lovers' idyll in the second theme. The third rhapsody, in A flat, tells of the hunt, of tourneys and the service of fair ladies. Its theme is first introduced in solemn tones by the harp alone. . . . The same theme immediately reappears as a dance, taking on several forms of variations until the ceremonial tones of the beginning resound once more in conclusion."

The first two rhapsodies were introduced in Prague in 1878 and the third in Berlin in the same year. In 1879 the Vienna Philharmonic, under Hans Richter, played all three works at one concert.

Recommended recording: Rhapsody in A-flat major, CM-X55 (London Philharmonic—Beecham).

## PIANO MUSIC

### *Humoresques*

These gay, charming, and witty little pieces for the piano, Op. 101—the seventh of which is undoubtedly the most famous single work written by Dvořák—were a fruit of Dvořák's American visit. The set was written soon after his return to Prague in 1894, out of material collated in his notebooks during his American visit. Dvořák composed the eight pieces forming the *Humoresques* cycle in seventeen days, and they are among the most pleasing

morsels in all piano music. They are generally in three-part song form, though the first and the fifth are in rondo form.

Recommended recording, *Humoresque*, No. 7 (the celebrated one), C-DB1667 (Friedman).

## QUARTET QUINTET

*Quartet in F major, "American"*

*Quintet in E-flat major*

Dvořák's visit to America was richly productive, inspiring not only his famous *Symphony from the New World*, but also two of his most famous chamber-music works: the *American* Quartet and the E-flat major Quintet. Like the symphony, the thematic material of these chamber works is derived from American folk sources. The source of the symphony was the Negro Spiritual; that of the Quartet and Quintet was autochthonous Indian music.

While Dvořák was in Spillville, Iowa, three Iroquois Indians visited him and performed authentic Indian music for him. Dvořák, ever a student of folk lore, was fascinated by the exotic melodies and the cogent rhythmic effects of Indian music; and it was not long before he decided to incorporate this idiom into some chamber works. (He also wrote a famous movement inspired by an Indian melody, the slow movement of his *Sonatina* for Violin and Piano, Op. 100—now famous in the Fritz Kreisler violin transcription under the title of *Indian Lament*). He did not incorporate actual Indian melodies into his works. "I have simply written original themes embodying the peculiarities of the Indian music and, using these themes as subjects, have developed them with all the resources of modern rhythm, harmony, counterpoint, and orchestral color."

The writing of the Quartet went quickly. Within three days his sketches were completed; and the composition of the entire work took only fifteen days. In it, Dvořák tried to express his exhilaration over new experiences in a new country. The first movement (whose opening theme shows Indian characteristics) breathes the free spirit of the great West. The melancholy second movement opens with a theme of recognizably Indian character.

Three days after completing the Quartet, Dvořák began writing the Quintet—a fact that explains why they are so much alike in spirit. In the Quintet the rhythms of the Indian drum are heard as a throbbing background in the first movement (first theme) and in the Scherzo. The third movement, *Larghetto*, is a set of five variations on a tuneful subject. The closing Rondo is built on melodic subjects whose brusqueness and vigor are obviously American in character.

Recommended recordings: Quartet in F major, VM-681 (Budapest String Quartet); Quintet in E-flat major, VM-811 (Prague String Quartet).

## SONGS

Dvořák's rich melodic talent inevitably made the song form uniquely grateful to him. Some of his songs have acquired a permanent place in the repertoire, among these the famous *Songs My Mother Taught Me* (the fourth of seven *Gypsy Songs*, Op. 55), and the *Cradle Song*. *Goin' Home* is not a song by Dvořák, but is a vocal adaptation by William Arms Fisher of the famous principal theme from the second movement of the *Symphony from the New World*. Dvořák's masterpiece in the realm of the song is his cycle, *Biblical Songs*.

*Biblical Songs*

Dvořák composed his ten *Biblical Songs*, Op. 99, in the years 1894–95. "The deep seriousness of these songs," wrote Paul Stefan, "was probably motivated by the deaths of Gounod and Tchaikovsky, whose obituaries Dvořák had read. Moreover, he had just heard that his father . . . was rapidly weakening. It was, indeed, not long before his father died. Easter, too, turned his thoughts to spiritual matters. . . . This work offers fresh testimony . . . of Dvořák's deep religious feeling. He himself chose the texts from the Czech translation of the Bible, a sixteenth-century achievement of the Bohemian Friars, obviously imbued with a Czech national quality. Dvořák's personal choice was from the Psalms, and the beauty and power of his music is admirably suited to them. Melody and style are here happily combined with profound spirituality."

## SYMPHONY

*Symphony from the New World*

Late in 1892, during Dvořák's stay in America, the critic Krehbiel brought the music of the American Negro to his attention. Dvořák was greatly impressed by this music and decided to utilize its style and mannerisms in music of his own creation. He left for Spillville, Iowa, where there was a colony of Czechs, and here worked on the sketches of his symphony. The *Symphony in E minor*, Op. 95—Dvořák's Fifth—was completed in 1893, and was given its first performance by the New York Philharmonic, Anton Seidl conducting, on December 15, 1893.

The symphony aroused a great deal of controversy. There was the question of the title: "Symphony from the New World." There were those who insisted that the title meant that the symphony came from the American soil, and was intended as an American work. Others interpreted the title as meaning that it was the nostalgic expression of a Bohemian composer writing in the New World but longing for the Old. Some thought the work an inspired masterpiece, and eloquently praised its lyric character and its American flavor. Others insisted that it was neither American nor Czech, but a strange hybrid product.

The controversy has long since been forgotten; but the symphony remains, one of the classics in symphonic literature.

One point should be emphasized: Dvořák did not actually incorporate Spirituals or other Negro folk tunes into his symphony. He modeled his own thematic material after the idiom of the Negro song, and did this with such authenticity and skill that we are sometimes inclined to think that his own melodies are of American origin. The famous melody in the slow movement of the symphony—now equally famous as the song *Goin' Home*—has such inherent kinship with the Negro Spiritual that many believe it to be a genuine song of our Southland; actually, it is Dvořák's own.

The symphony has its faults, particularly when music Negroid in character is blended with Bohemian phrases and mannerisms. But for all that, the symphony remains vital, imaginative, alive. It is flushed with beauty and poetry. It is a personal utterance of genuine poignancy. Negro elements are integral and inextricable parts of the entire fabric. In the first movement we hear reminiscences of *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* in the flute—though it must be added that it is only a suggestion of that Spiritual, not the Spiritual itself. All the melancholy and mellowness and religious feeling of the Negro Spiritual is found in the eloquent melody of the second movement, beautifully written for the English horn. The third and fourth movements, Scherzo and Allegro con fuoco respectively, once again do not quote Negro melodies but maintain the character of Negroid music in their spirit, fiery temperament, energy, and nervousness—felicitous expressions of American life as Dvořák saw it.

Recommended recording: VM-799 (Rochester Philharmonic—Isturbi).

## TRIO

### *Trio in E minor, "Dumky"*

In a footnote to his trio, Op. 90, Dvořák explained that *dumka* (*dumky* is the plural) is a Russian word, generally used in popular literature and designating a highly emotional character. Actually it only means a fleeting thought, but Dvořák transplanted the word into music, to designate a movement of a brooding and melancholy nature and a slow tempo. The *Dumky* trio, for violin, 'cello, and piano, consists of six short movements or *dumky*; and the entire work is unified by a general elegiac feeling. He composed it in 1891, and on April 11 of that year it was given its first performance by a trio including Dvořák himself. "In this work," wrote Paul Stefan, "Dvořák is still under the spell of the Requiem and its elegiac mood. . . . The First Dumka has a theme that is perhaps most characteristic of the whole. This same theme in D is taken over in the section in fast time, graced with spirited and jolly figurations, a perfect example of the multiple meaning of so many ideas that came to Dvořák. In the Second Dumka, there are two plaintive themes in the slow part, to which the fast section replies in passionate accents with a new, though related theme. The mood be-



comes calmer in the Third Dumka. . . . Until this point, the whole work reveals a unified, almost self-contained construction, and the first three Dumky could almost be considered as an introductory movement, in a sort of rondo-form. In that case, the Fourth Dumka would be the slow movement, thematically reminiscent of the First Dumka, in the minor key, with the fast section in the major, the whole culminating in a surprising D major. The Russian character of the melody is remarkable: a melancholy song in four strophes is played on the 'cello. The Fifth Dumka is called a Scherzo: its rhythmic energy does not abate until the end. The Sixth Dumka would be the Finale, with a vivace theme surging forward to the conclusion. . . . If there is any program to these 'Dumky,' it is this: melancholy and the delirious joy of life combined in the same being."

Recommended recording: C-DX1017-20 (Kentner; Holst; Pini).

## ELGAR

SIR EDWARD ELGAR, b. Broadheath near Worcester, England, 1857. Studied theory by himself, and violin with Politzer. For a while he served as organist, then abandoned all other musical occupations for that of composer. He first achieved success with his *Enigma Variations* for orchestra and with his choral masterpiece, *The Dream of Gerontius*. It was not long before he was accepted as England's foremost living composer. In 1904 he was knighted, and a three-day Elgar festival took place at Covent Garden. He received the Order of the Merit in 1911, and was appointed Master of the King's Music in 1924. In 1931 he had conferred on him the highest honor that the Crown can bestow on a musician, a baronetcy. He died at Marl Bank in 1934.

IN Elgar's nature there was a mysticism, and a poetic strain, which opened sluices of melody and fluid counterpoint. His musical writing was usually crystalline, always stamped with good breeding. He was not afraid of emotional display, of giving expression to deep feelings. Moreover, he had an infallible instinct for orchestration and for building dramatic sequences, and could suggest pageantry and glamour in magnificently rich tonal speech. He was not an original composer, and he failed to produce an idiom distinctly his own. His music often derives from Schumann and from Wagner. Though he was never the experimenter or the pioneer, his language was, at its best, one of great beauty which cannot fail to charm.

### CONCERTO

#### *Violin Concerto in B minor*

The Elgar Violin Concerto, Op. 61, is suffused with romantic ardor from the first page to the last, and in its best pages rises to emotional heights. Its

first movement, Allegro, is introduced by a rhapsodic orchestral preface, extended and expansive ("Here," commented one musician, "is a musical equivalent of the British Empire!") in which the principal themes are stated. The solo violin enters with the concluding bars of the opening cadenza, and then proceeds to music of quiet beauty. The entire movement abounds with beautiful melodies, and ends with a restatement of the opening theme. In the second movement, Andante, Elgar has written a song for violin and orchestra which is among his lyric masterpieces. Warm-hearted, ductile, of a quiet serenity, it achieves an intensity of utterance that touches the listener profoundly and personally. The closing movement (Allegro molto) is vivacious and brilliant, frequently sweeping the listener with its momentum and force.

The concerto is dedicated to Fritz Kreisler who gave it its world première on November 10, 1910, with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London, Elgar conducting.

Recommended recording: VM-174 (Menuhin; London Symphony—Elgar).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Enigma Variations*

It was Elgar's *Variations on an Original Theme*, Op. 36—called the *Enigma*—that first brought him out of obscurity to fame; and to the present day it has remained his most famous large orchestral work. He completed it in 1899, and a London agent brought it to the attention of that eminent conductor Hans Richter, who was on the hunt for new English music. Though Richter had never heard of Elgar, the manuscript impressed him deeply and he decided to perform it without delay. To him it seemed the first English work of recent times which avoided pedantry and technical display and did reveal tenderness, emotional beauty, and a flowing lyricism. Richter introduced it at his London concert of June 19, 1899. Strictly speaking, the work as Hans Richter introduced it is not the one that is heard today, since after this first performance Elgar revised some sections and added a new coda. In its final revision it was reintroduced at the Worcester Festival under Elgar's direction. Its first performance outside of England took place at Düsseldorf, under Julius Butts, on February 7, 1901. The immediate success of the *Variations* in and out of England established Elgar's reputation permanently.

The score is prefaced by a series of initials, each set of initials designating a close friend of Elgar's whom one of the variations portrays. The first variation, eloquent and poetic, is a portrait of Elgar's wife, who was the greatest single influence in his life, and the final variation is a self-portrait. "It is true," Elgar confessed, "that I have sketched, for their amusement and mine, the idiosyncrasies of fourteen of my friends, not necessarily musicians; but this is a personal matter."

The reason Elgar gave the name *Enigma* to this work was for a long time shrouded in mystery. "The Enigma," he said, "I shall not explain—its 'dark saying' must be left unguessed." Subsequently, he was tempted into giving a

hint as to the nature of the enigma. It consisted in a hidden theme which (so Elgar suggested) though never actually played in the work is supposed to accompany each and every variation, persisting through the entire work in the role of a silent accompaniment. It was Henry E. Krehbiel's guess that the silent theme is the motto melody of Wagner's *Parsifal*.

Recommended recording: VM-475 (B.B.C. Symphony—Boult).

### *Introduction and Allegro*

Ernest Newman has informed us that the idea for the *Introduction and Allegro*, Op. 47, first occurred to Elgar during a visit to Wales in 1902. "He was impressed by the sound of distant singing, in which the cadence of a falling third caught his fancy. From the train of thought thus generated sprang the main theme of the work—the pseudo-Welsh theme. Later on, a song heard in the valley of the Wye reinforced the Welsh impressions, and led to the completion of the work."

It was introduced by the London Symphony Orchestra on March 8, 1905.

In this work, Elgar adopts the old concerto grosso form—using a string quartet (as concertante) set against the orchestra (*tutti*). Rosa Newmarch has described this music as follows: "The Introduction opens with a theme given out simultaneously fortissimo by solo quartet and orchestra. The quartet then starts a subject in the minor which recurs in the Allegro in fuller form and a major key. The two themes are treated for a time, and presently the solo viola introduces an allusion to the melody in the Welsh style. After this broad, expressive cantilena the opening theme is recalled, leading to the close of the Introduction which is effected by another reference to the Welsh theme. The Allegro begins with the complete statement of the minor subject mentioned above, which is elaborated at some length before the solo quartet announces the second subject, recognizable by its staccato semiquaver figure. To the development of this succeeds the initial theme of the work, on which a climax is built. . . . Instead of a conventional working out of the thematic material, the composer gives us a fugato movement on a new subject (Allegro) started by the second violins of the orchestra. This spirited section leads back to the re-entrance of the first subject of the Allegro. . . . After this, quartet and orchestra combine to give out a full and emphatic version of the Welsh melody, *molto sostenuto*. The work ends with reminiscences of the first theme of the Allegro."

Recommended recording: V-12601-2 (B.B.C. Symphony—Boult).

### *Pomp and Circumstance*

In 1901, Elgar composed a set of six patriotic military marches for the coronation of Edward VII. The first of these, in the key of D major (Op. 39) has since become world-famous; when the *Pomp and Circumstance* march is mentioned, it is this one that is meant. It is in two parts, the first a brisk and nervous passage which forms the prelude to a flowing, majestic melody.

On hearing the second part, King Edward VII exclaimed, "That tune will go round the world!" His prophecy was fulfilled. *Pomp and Circumstance* has become something of a second national anthem for England, and is as intimately associated with the British Empire as *God Save the King*. About a decade after its composition, the English writer Laurence Housman set words to the second melody, the poem and music together being sung as *Land of Hope and Glory*.

Recommended recording: V-11885 (Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler).

## SYMPHONY

### *Symphony in E flat*

Elgar's Second Symphony, Op. 62, composed in 1911, and introduced at the London Festival on May 24 of the same year, was dedicated to "the memory of King Edward VII."

Ernest Newman describes the two leading traits of this symphony as "jocundity and sweetness." "The prevailing note of the symphony is joyousness. It is untroubled by any of the darker problems of the soul. For the most part it sings and dances in the sheer delight with life; and even in the beautiful slow movement, thoughtful as it is, there is nothing of the tense, nervous emotion of the Adagio of his first symphony. . . . In the first movement (Allegro) . . . there are two well-defined chief subject-groups, the first main idea especially being built up of a number of motives that can be used collectively or individually, while further varieties of mood are obtained by means of striking episodes. . . . The slow movement (Larghetto) commences with a series of softly-breathed chords in the strings that set us at once in a much remoter and less active world than that of the Allegro . . . The third movement is a Rondo. Its main theme is full of quips and surprises . . . The finale is magnificent in its grandeur and is overpowering."

# ENESCO

GEORGES ENESCO, b. Liveni, Rumania, 1881. Studied at the Conservatories of Vienna and Paris. In 1899 he won the Paris Conservatory's highest award for violin playing. He began his career as virtuoso, then continued it as a composer, scoring his first success in 1898 with *Poème Roumaine*. He has since achieved triple fame as violinist, conductor, and composer.

**S**TRONGLY influenced by the folk music of his native Rumania, Enesco is a nationalist composer whose best works combine a sound technique, a good melodic sense, and a fine feeling for form with the vivid colors and varied rhythms of Rumanian folk songs. Though he is best known for his

splendid *Rumanian Rhapsodies*, he has also composed an excellent sonata for violin and piano, Op. 25, three symphonies, and a string quartet, all romantic in spirit.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Rumanian Rhapsody No. 1 in A major*

Enesco composed two *Rumanian Rhapsodies* in which folk melodies of his native country are incorporated. The first is in A major, the second in D major. Of the two, the first is the more famous. The *Rhapsody* is filled with rousing and spirited melodies, one following the other in rapid succession, and then undergoing subtle variations. The ecstatic and frenetic dances of Rumania—the *hora* and the *sirba*, for example—are to be found in this work. It is passionate music achieving climaxes of great power, and carries away its listeners with its brutal sweeps of sound.

The Second Rhapsody is less popular, no doubt, because it is less exciting and cogent. It is languorous and moody, revealing a different facet of Rumanian temperament from the one that is interpreted in the First Rhapsody.

Recommended recording: Two Rhapsodies, VM-830 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy; National Symphony—Kindler).

## SONATA

### *Violin Sonata in A minor*

Enesco's third Sonata for violin and piano, Op. 25, is also his best. It was composed in 1926.

The composer himself has provided the following program for this music:

"First Movement: The cries and complaints of unhappy Rumanian refugees (in the days of their tribulation as an oppressed people) in their mountain retreats . . . anguished lamentations of those who lost their homes and fertile valleys. In the relative peace of their mountain refuge where the enemy cannot reach, they stretch out their arms with hope and prayer to the distant horizon, awaiting a miracle to happen for their salvation and deliverance. In vain do they pray; their misery deepens and grows until it reaches desperation.

"Second Movement: Mysterious voices and strange cries out of the deep and dark night, sinister omens, oriental, distant sounds shrouded in the shadows of pessimism.

"Third Movement: Among the unhappy folk is one who, in a fit of drunkenness, finds his consolation in a sort of deliberate philosophical and abstract indifference, and thus reaches sublime serenity and splendid isolation, a state of 'Nirvana' in the midst of the unhappy world around him."

The three movements are marked: *Moderato malincolio*; *Andante sostenuto e misterioso*; *Allegro con brio*.

Recommended recording: VM-318 (Yehudi and Hephzibah Menuhin).

# FALLA

MANUEL DE FALLA, b. Cadiz, 1876. Studied at the Madrid Conservatory under Pedrell, who directed him towards folk music. In 1905, in a competition for national opera conducted by the Real Academia de Bellas Artes, he won first prize with *La Vida Breve*. He lived for a while in Paris absorbing its musical life; then, in 1914, returned to his native country to settle in Granada, where he composed his major works. In 1939, he abandoned Spain to settle permanently in Argentina.

IN Manuel de Falla, the principal tendencies of Spanish music of the past fifty years are crystallized and unified, in him reaching their surest expression. More successfully than any other composer before him, he achieved a wedlock of form and content. Deriving his technique from the French he made of it a supple instrument. With that technique he was able to give expression to the Spanish musical spirit. His work is more imaginative than that of his predecessors because he hardly ever borrowed directly from folk songs; the thematic material is usually of his own invention. As a result, his music boasts a greater variety of material and much more individuality than that of, say, Granados and Albéniz, penetrating to the very heart of Spanish music.

## BALLETS

### *El Amor Brujo*

In one act and two scenes, book by Gregorio Martinez Sierra, first produced at the Teatro de Lara in Madrid on April 15, 1915.

Soon after returning from his stay in Paris, Manuel de Falla toured Andalusia extensively and was thus brought directly into contact with Spanish life, folk music, and folk dances. At the same time he began working on music with a Spanish idiom. In 1915, he completed *El Amor Brujo* (*Love, the Sorcerer*) which his librettist Sierra had derived from a well-known Andalusian folk tale.

It tells of Candela, a beautiful gypsy who, when her husband dies, falls in love with a youth named Carmelo. The ghost of Candela's dead husband haunts her. Candela prevails upon another beautiful gypsy, Lucia, to flirt with the ghost. The ghost succumbs to Lucia's seductiveness, and leaves Candela free to pursue her own love-affair.

The first performance of the ballet, which took place in Madrid, had only moderate success, despite the originality and beauty of Falla's score. Soon he prepared an orchestral suite from its best musical numbers, and this was introduced in Madrid the following year—1916—under the baton of Fernandez Arbós. This suite, now popular on symphony programs, is highly attractive for its authentically Spanish character, its Oriental color, and its sensuous moods. These moods pass from refinement to turbulence and abandon, from delicate poetry to hot-blooded gypsy passion.

The orchestral suite *El Amor Brujo* comprises twelve numbers: Introduction and Scene; the Gypsies—Evening; Song of Sorrowing Love (with voice); The Homecomer; Dance of Terror; The Magic Circle; Ritual Fire Dance; Scene; Song of the Will-o'-the-Wisp (with voice); Pantomime; Dance of the Game of Love (with voice); Morning Chimes. In the original score, the voice is sung backstage by a mezzo-soprano, but it is customary to assign the part to a wind instrument, frequently the horn.

Recommended recording: orchestral suite, CM-108 (Symphony Orchestra—Morales).

### *The Three-Cornered Hat*

In one act, book by Martinez Sierra, first performed at the Alhambra Theatre in London, on July 22, 1919.

Diaghilev, genius of the Ballet Russe, aspired to produce an authentic Spanish ballet which would synthesize the Spanish arts. During a visit to Spain he met Falla, who played for him excerpts from a "pantomime" he had recently composed to a libretto by Sierra—a libretto made from a witty novel by Alarcon. (Hugo Wolf used the same text for his only opera, *Der Corregidor*.) In this music Diaghilev saw the answer to his need, suggested certain revisions to make it more suitable for ballet, and commissioned Falla to prepare the entire score for him.

The story is a "triangle" comedy about a miller, his beautiful wife, and a lascivious governor. The governor effects the miller's arrest in order to make love to the miller's wife. She teases the governor with a dance, sinuously eluding his outstretched hands until, stumbling after her, he falls into a nearby stream. Drenched to the skin, he removes his clothes and slips into the miller's bed while waiting for them to dry. Suddenly the miller returns to find the governor in bed. In revenge he substitutes his own clothes for the governor's, writes a hurried note to his victim saying that the latter's wife is quite as desirable as his own, and—whistling a roguish tune—exits from the scene.

The first performance of the ballet by the Diaghilev forces was a triumph, making Falla world-famous. Not only is it his best score—it is one of the greatest artistic creations of modern Spain. The music is deeply rooted in Spanish soil; the dances are modeled closely after the native gypsy dances of Granada and Seville; and the melodies are also indigenous. One of them, as a matter of fact, is a folk song that Falla heard in an obscure corner of Andalusia sung by a blind street-singer to guitar accompaniment. Finally, the score has an engaging wit and brightness.

Falla has made three of the principal dances of the ballet into an orchestral suite often performed on symphony programs. They are entitled: The Neighbors; The Miller's Dance; Final Dance. Turina called the middle dance the best of the trio because of its "typically Andalusian character, its fascinat-

ing rhythm which is like an affirmation of Southern art, and its Moorish character." The final dance is a *Jota*.

Recommended recording: three dances, VM-505 (Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler).

## CONCERTO

### *Concerto for Harpsichord, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Violin, and 'Cello*

Wanda Landowska has informed us that in this chambermusic concerto "the composer did not intend to write a concerto for a soloist with an instrument ensemble as accompaniment; on the contrary, though the part of the harpsichord is throughout the work predominant, the other instruments not only do not reduce their action to a single 'ripieno' but are as important in the total contexture as the principal instrument. Nor was it the intention of the composer to follow rigorously the structure of the classical concerto. We have a work of free conception in which, however, it is easy to discover certain traditional values of character and form."

Concerning the origin of this unusual work, Landowska has written: "Some years ago, I spent several days with my friend Falla in Granada and at that very moment he was working at his *Retablo*, a part of which he devoted to the harpsichord. I had my harpsichord with me, and I was able to play for him a great deal and to discuss the various possibilities of the instrument. He became more and more interested, and after a few days' conversation between us he grew so enthusiastic that he resolved to write a concerto for harpsichord. He took three years to compose the work, which was finished in September of 1926." Miss Landowska played the harpsichord part when it was introduced at a festival of Falla music given by the Casals Orchestra in Barcelona, Pablo Casals conducting, in November 1926.

Many authorities on Falla's music—Gilbert Chase among them—consider this work his masterpiece. "Never," wrote Chase, "has the eternal essence of Spain been so nakedly embodied in music." In a comprehensive analysis Ralph Kirkpatrick, the well-known harpsichordist, discussed the concerto as follows:

"It is a work of extraordinary power and originality of conception. Like most of Falla's music it combines a popular, almost naïvely legendary quality of spirit with the most highly cultivated musical skill. Anyone who has heard Spanish gypsy guitar players will understand the exuberance of the first movement with its elaborate web of rhythmic details and folk-song-like melodies interwoven with almost Oriental profusion. The mosaic of detail is so elaborate that, like Moorish decoration, it almost obscures the simplicity of the basic proportions. The slow movement is inscribed at Granada 'A. Dom. MCMXXVI in Festo Corpus Christi.' It is a processional in which fragments



of plainsong are mingled with the blare of discordant trumpets and the bitter surge of religious ecstasy. In this movement are all of Spain, the harsh bitter fervor, the restraint of ceremony, the intellectual ecstasy that are the inseparable constituents of the Spanish character. The last movement is a dance piece of subtle and changing rhythms full of allusions to the indelible impression left on Spanish music by Domenico Scarlatti. There are repetitions of phrases, harmonic progressions, which recall Scarlatti and yet are completely different, alternations of the blandest consonance with the sharpest possible dissonance and against an overwhelming profusion of detail."

Recommended recording: CM-Xg (Falla; Moyse; Bonneau; Godeau; Darrieux; Cruque).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

(For the orchestral suites *El Amor Brujo* and *The Three-Cornered Hat*, see above, Ballets).

### *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*

Falla composed his most famous orchestral work, *Noches en los Jardines de España*, in 1916. He attached no specific program, but the title of the three movements suggest the Spanish pictures that he sought to evoke. The first movement is called "In the Gardens of the Generalife"; the second, "A Dance Is Heard in the Distance"; the third, "In the Gardens of the Sierra de Cordoba." "If these 'symphonic impressions' have achieved their object," Falla has written, "the mere enumeration of their titles should be a sufficient guide to the hearer. Although . . . the composer has followed a definite design, regarding tonal, rhythmical, and thematic material . . . the end for which it was written is no other than to evoke [images of] places, sensations, and sentiments. The themes employed are based upon the rhythms, modes, cadences, and ornamental figures which distinguish the popular music of Andalusia, though they are rarely used in their original forms; and the orchestration frequently employs, and employs conventionally, certain effects peculiar to the popular instruments used in those parts of Spain. The music has no pretensions to being descriptive; it is merely expressive. But something more than the sounds of festivals and dances have inspired these 'evocations in sound,' for melancholy and mystery have their part also."

This is one of the most deeply poetic of Falla's works, tone-painting in the most delicate colors. It is, as Turina remarks, "really wonderful evocation, although in a sense the most tragic and sorrowful of his works. In the peculiar flavor of the orchestral sonority, one can in fact discern a feeling of bitterness, as if the composer had striven to express a drama of an intimate and passionate nature." Jean-Aubry finds that here "Falla is much more than a painter of Spain; he is an invoker of Spanish emotion, often the most hidden, the most reserved. Nothing is less brilliant than these nocturnes; but nothing is

more strongly colored by the play of lights and shadows skilfully contrived. The force and the simplicity of the effects are remarkable."

### *Spanish Dance No. 1*

One of Falla's most famous Spanish dances—challenging the popularity of the "Ritual Fire Dance" from *El Amor Brujo*—is to be found in his earliest ballet, *La Vida Breve*. This ballet was the first work in which he aspired to the creation of a Spanish art. He composed it in 1905 to a libretto by Carlos Fernandez Shaw. Though at first turned down for performance, it brought considerable recognition to its composer by winning for him the first prize in a national competition conducted by the Real Academia de Bellas Artes. It was first performed in 1914 in Spain, and was outstandingly successful. The corybantic dances, the sinuous monologues resembling Andalusian folk songs, the seductive oriental melodies found favor with Spanish audiences. Unquestionably the most famous single number in the ballet is the hot-blooded and sensuous *Spanish Dance No. 1*. Fritz Kreisler has made an excellent transcription of this dance for violin and piano (Recommended recording: V-14625; Heifetz).

Recommended recording: orchestral version, C-67818D (Théâtre de la Monnaie Orchestra—Bustin).

## FAURÉ

GABRIEL FAURÉ, b. Pamiers, Ariège, 1845. After studying with Saint-Saëns, he became organist in several important Parisian churches. Later he achieved fame as a teacher, first at the Ecole Niedermayer, then at the Conservatory. In 1905, Fauré was made director of the Conservatory, a post he held with great distinction for fifteen years. He first attracted attention as a composer with several songs published in 1865. In 1922, he was promoted to the highest class in the Legion of Honor. He died in Paris in 1924.

THE most important trait of Fauré's music is its successful blend of Greek culture and the modern spirit. "By the spirit of his art, by the form even of his *melos*, Fauré is really Greek," wrote Julien Tiersot. "But he is not merely a Greek musician come to life in our twentieth century—it is the spirit of Hellenism, as well as its forms, which is reborn in him. . . . He too thrusts himself beyond the spheres in order to bring back pure beauty." Yet in his conciseness of speech, and in the far-reaching implications of his message, he is a modernist. As André Coeuroy wrote, Fauré's is the "harmonic language of tomorrow; [he] suggested twenty years before Debussy the syntax of a new century." And Vuillermoz: "He created an altogether modern,

logical, well-thought-out style, never sacrificing to passing fashions, but steadily tending towards greater simplicity." By freeing French music of its frequent pretensions and metaphysical aims, by perfecting a style of crystalline purity, Fauré influenced all French composers who followed him; to a great degree he was the most important precursor of the modern French school of composers.

## CHORAL MUSIC

### *Requiem*

Fauré's *Requiem*, Op. 48, is one of the most deeply moving choral works of our time. It was composed in 1887, and in January 1888 was introduced at the Madeleine Church in Paris.

The Requiem is in seven sections: I. Introit and Kyrie (Molto largo; Andante moderato); II. Offertorium (Adagio); III. Sanctus (Andante moderato); IV. Pie Jesu (Adagio); V. Agnus Dei (Andante); VI. Libera Me (Moderato); VII. In Paradisum (Andante moderato).

"The Requiem," wrote Nadia Boulanger, "is not only one of the greatest works of Gabriel Fauré, but also one of those which do most honor to music and thought. Nothing purer, clearer in definition, has been written. . . . Certainly it is his musical web, his architecture, his reason and order, that produce his sovereign beauty, as one could demonstrate with a joy, a pride, and a respect for all the minutiae of his workmanship. But it is where these attributes end, admirable as they are, that the real Requiem begins. No exterior effect alters its sober and rather severe expression of grief, no restlessness troubles its deep meditation, no doubt strains its spotless faith, its gentle confidence, its tender and tranquil expectancy. All is truly captivating, and marked with the hand of a master. Everything is usual; but with an alteration, a passing note, some special inflection of which he has the secret, Gabriel Fauré gives a new and inimitable character to what he touches. The end, with its linked chords descending in double measures, strangely recalls an adorable *Agnus Dei* in G major by Claudio Monteverdi."

Recommended recording: CM-354 (Soloists, Chorus, Montreal Festival Orchestra—Pelletier).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Incidental Music to Pelléas and Mélisande*

Four years before Debussy composed his famous opera, and five years after the drama itself was first presented, Fauré wrote incidental music for Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. His incidental music (Op. 80) includes three sections: I. Prelude to the play, a richly lyric and emotional page of music; II. *Fileuses*, an entr'acte preceding the third act which sets the atmosphere for the opening scene of the act in which Mélisande is spinning; III. *Sicilienne*,

eloquent and touching music descriptive of the closing scene of the play—Mélisande's death.

Recommended recording: VM-941 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

## PIANO MUSIC

Fauré composed many works for the piano, including *Impromptus*, *Nocturnes*, *Barcarolles*, *Romances sans paroles*, *Preludes*, and *Pièces brèves*. Beautifully adapted for the piano, his idiom here is no less poetic or less evocative of the subtlest ideas and feelings than it is in his choral and chamber music. His pieces are models "of sheer lyricism or of winged fantasy," wrote Coeuroy, "for which it is difficult to find a parallel." And Landormy speaks rapturously of their "richness of color, as of perfumed flowers." A certain monotony of style is prevalent throughout his one hundred or so works for the piano; but if one singles out his best pieces—the F minor *Impromptu* (Op. 31), the A-flat major *Nocturne* (Op. 33), the *Barcarolle*, No. 6 (Op. 70), the *Theme and Variations* (Op. 73)—one is in the presence of a richly individual style suffused with original colors and expressions.

Recommended recordings: *Barcarolle* Op. 66, No. 5, V-4415 (Boynet); *Barcarolle*, Op. 70, No. 6, C-69063D (Long); *Impromptu* in F minor, Op. 31, No. 2, C-LF126 (Long); *Nocturne* in A-flat major, Op. 33, No. 3, V-15660 (Rubinstein); *Nocturne* in E-flat major, Op. 36, No. 4, C-69063 (Long); *Theme and Variations*, Op. 73, CM-X156 (Guilbert).

## QUARTET

### *Quartet, Op. 121*

In chamber music, Fauré's exquisite style found a fitting medium. As Coeuroy wrote: "Totally without perverse sonorities, it is graced with a style most diverse in texture. The melodic lines are clear-cut. Fauré was an impressionist who had mastered design and who possessed a sparkling vivacity which thrills, and which, whenever heard again, thrills anew." Besides the *Quartet*, Op. 121, he composed a *Piano Quintet* and a *Piano Quartet*, and all of them reward the listener through their consistent melodic beauty and refinement of style.

The deceptive easiness and grace of the *Quartet* lend the work an air of spontaneity; but, as Vuillermoz points out, "never did a creative artist present us with subtler and more powerful achievements." A Hellenic kind of beauty—serene and objective—pervades the entire quartet, a beauty couched in a setting of exquisite perfection.

Recommended recording: VM-372 (Pro-Arte)

## SONATA

### *Sonata No. 1 in A major*

Fauré's beautiful sonata for violin and piano, Op. 13, is a comparatively early work. It was composed in 1876, and when we recall that it antedates the

César Franck sonata by ten years, as well as the three Brahms sonatas, we must confess that it is a work of striking historical importance as well as of beauty. Romantic violin literature has few sonata works so impassioned and full of ardor as this early work of Fauré; without question its influence on the French composers of its own and a later day was considerable. Florent Schmitt emphasized this point when he wrote: "The Sonata in A appears, by its beauty and originality, on the one hand to continue a line of development which seemed to have ended with Schumann and Chopin, and on the other hand, to foreshadow Franck's work of ten years later; and it marks a red-letter day in the history of chamber music." The first movement (*Allegro molto*) abounds in attractive lyric ideas which are developed with contrapuntal skill. It flows, as Schmitt remarks, with "unconstraint, graceful ease, yet never appears to lack invention." The second movement (*Andante*) is a page of that suggestive writing, now tender, now melancholy, which was the forte of French Romantic composers. Following a rather vivacious and exhilarating *Allegro Vivace*, comes the comparatively brief but effective closing movement (*Allegro quasi presto*), music of a fiery mood and quickened step.

Recommended recording: VM-859 (Elman).

## SONGS

In some respects, Fauré was greatest in his songs, where he achieved a cameo-like perfection that has placed them with the greatest song literature of all time. The purity of his style, the infinite variety of his touch, and his perpetually fresh melodic line—together with his simplicity—inspired more than one critic to speak of him as the "French Schubert."

Even in his first songs, the full strength of the later Fauré is suggested. Ravel points out that, in Fauré's early efforts in the song form, the personality of the mature composer is already recognizable. "In these pieces, the seductiveness of his melodic contour does not cede to the subtlety of the harmonies."

But in his second and third volumes of songs we have the master at the height of his creative powers. "In his second volume," wrote E. Burlingame Hill, "Fauré at once launches into his own vein. . . . He often recalls the atmosphere of the salon which presupposes cultivation and receptivity to mood. Of this type are the songs *Nell*, *Rencontre*, *Chanson d'amour*."

"In the same volume also are many songs which present clearly Fauré's higher gifts for lyric interpretation and imaginative delineation of mood. Among these are *Le Secret* (intimate sentiment), *En Prière* (delicately mystical), *Nocturne* (striking harmonic idiom), *Claire de lune* (adroit suggestions of Verlaine's Watteau-esque text). Fauré's imaginative gift is displayed at its highest in *Les Berceaux* (expansive human sentiment), and *Les Roses d'Is-pahan* (impassioned exoticism).

"In the third volume are two songs which extend his emotional range significantly: *Au cimetière* (profoundly elegiac, characteristic of the out-

spoken lamentation of the Latin), *Prison* (tragic emotion heightened by declamatory style)."

Recommended recordings: "A Song Recital" (including the cycles *La Bonne chanson* and *L'Horizon chimérique*), VM-478 (Panzer); *Au cimetière*, V-15036 (Panzer); *Les Berceaux*, C-LF125 (Vallin); *Claire de lune*, C-4164M (Thill); *En prière*, C-4218M (Thill); *Nell*, V-2078 (Frijs); *Prison*, C-DF2487 (Guillmant); *Les Roses d'Ispahan*, V-1997 (Pons); *Le Secret*, V-2078 (Frijs).

# FLOTOW

FRIEDRICH VON FLOTOW, b. Teutendorf, Mecklenburg, 1812. Studied in Paris with Reicha, then began composing operettas. In 1839, his first opera was performed successfully. His masterpiece, *Martha*, was composed in 1847. From 1856 to 1863, he was Intendant of the Schwerin Court Theater. He died at Darmstadt in 1883.

## OPERA

### *Martha*

**I**N five acts, book by W. Friedrich, first performed at the Kärntnerthortheater in Vienna on November 25, 1847.

Flotow developed the opera by which he is today remembered from an earlier work entitled *Lady Harriet*. He subjected *Martha* to four elaborate revisions before he was satisfied with it. Its first performance in Vienna was successful, and it was not long before the opera spread Flotow's name throughout the world of music. By 1882, *Martha* had had more than five hundred performances in Vienna alone, besides having been performed in practically every major opera house in Europe.

In *Martha*, Flotow achieved a superficial kind of beauty, whose appeal, however, does not seem to diminish. No one pretends that, even in its best pages, it touches either depth or originality. It is graceful, light-hearted, gay, full of melodies that are tuneful and ebullient. As one French critic pointed out, the opera has "grace and emotion, a charm that is often distinguished, an adroit verve, and, upon occasion, felicitous, lively rhythms, as well as distinguished melodies." Edgar Istel pointed out that Flotow's greatest talent lay in writing "melodies which take hold of one, less owing to their sincerity than to their pleasantness and rhythmical life," without "subtlety and parade of learning."

Characteristic of the appealing melody of *Martha* are the two principal arias, both of them world-famous: "The Last Rose of Summer" and "*M'Appari*." "The Last Rose of Summer" is not original with Flotow, but is an old Irish melody *The Groves of Blarney* which he borrowed for this opera.

In Queen Anne's England, two fine ladies—Harriet and Nancy—decide upon the escapade of disguising themselves as servants to two farmers, Lionel and Plunkett. The young men fall in love with their servants. After Lady Harriet (who calls herself Martha) sings *The Last Rose of Summer*, Lionel proposes marriage to her. Weary of the game, the two young ladies escape from the farmhouse. Eventually it is learned—through the agency of a lost ring—that Lionel is actually the son of the deceased Earl of Derby. His wealth and property are restored to him, and with these he succeeds in acquiring Lady Harriet's hand.

Recommended recordings: "*Qui sola, vergin rosa*," ("The Last Rose of Summer"), V-1355 (Galli-Curci); "*Chi mi dira*," V-1135 (Journet); "*M'Appari*" V-13790, (Bjoerling).

## FOSTER

STEPHEN COLLINS FOSTER, b. Lawrenceville, near Pittsburgh, 1826. Virtually self-taught in music, he wrote in 1844 his first song—*Lou'siana Belle*—for a club of his Pittsburgh friends who met regularly to sing. By 1846 he had also written for his club two of his most famous songs: *Oh, Susanna* and *Uncle Ned*. In that year he went to Cincinnati to work in his brother's warehouse. Here his interest in life on the Ohio River grew, as well as his enthusiasm for the popular minstrel shows of the day. From his association with the Christy Minstrels developed some of his finest songs, including *Old Folks at Home*, commonly called *Swanee River*. After an ill-fated marriage he moved to New York, where in 1864 he died after a period of obscurity and poverty aggravated by increasing intemperance.

FOSTER might well have said, with Goethe's minstrel, "I sing as the birds sing." His was spontaneous song, but it poured forth abundantly. The best ones reveal a wonderful instinct for melody—an instinct that he developed fully. But he had practically no musical training, his conception of harmony was schoolboyish, and he never departed from the conventional song formulas of his period. Of some two hundred Foster songs, only a dozen or so have survived; but these are remarkable for exquisite taste, refinement of feeling, and melodic beauty. Foster, however, was neither self-critical nor discriminating: within the same hour he could write a masterpiece and a shoddy hack-piece—and was seldom capable of recognizing which was which. But when he was inspired, he wrote with tenderness, freshness, and nobility of style. He was a born melodist, and the first of America's great song composers.

## SONGS

Stephen Foster first attained success with his early *Oh, Susanna* and *Uncle Ned*, written in his boyhood home when he was but nineteen. But—how-

ever many and enduring the songs he wrote from then on—he was never to earn from them anything like what they were worth. While he lived in Cincinnati, a music publisher there, named Peters, offered to include some of the Foster songs in an album he was preparing to issue—if Foster would consent to forgo royalties. The boy agreed, and the consequence was that *Sable Harmonies*—which contained his songs but did not mention his name—netted Peters more than \$10,000 of which not one cent was turned over to Foster. By this time his first two songs were being sung all over the country, *Uncle Ned* becoming famous in minstrel shows, and *Oh, Susanna* being adopted as “theme song” by the 49-ers striking westward to California gold.

In 1852 Foster began that association with the dean of minstrels, Ed Christy, which produced so many of his most memorable songs. It was for Christy that he wrote *Old Folks at Home*—though here again his gifts earned him little, since Christy paid him \$15 for the right to announce himself as its composer. In a few years’ time, the song (now commonly called *Swanee River*) had sold half a million copies and was popular throughout the North.

*Swanee River* also became a favorite song of the South, as is illustrated by an authenticated anecdote. During the Civil War a group of Confederate officers, home on leave, dropped into a tavern, where they proceeded to drink heavily, and then get into a brawl. All attempts to quiet them were futile until the tavern musician was inspired to start his band to playing *Swanee River*—whereupon the rioters sobered down and left for home with due apologies.

For Christy’s Minstrels, Foster wrote some of his greatest melodies, including *Massa’s In de Cold Ground* (1852), *My Old Kentucky Home* (1863), and *Old Black Joe* (1860).

His genius, wrote Harold Vincent Milligan, was “of the purest quality and exactly suited to the expression of those simple but profound emotions, common to all humanity, embodied in his songs. His immortal melodies are a distinct contribution to the world’s music.” His world was a small one, but it was his own. Writing music for the masses, he tapped a vein of beauty which our popular song had not heretofore known, and in doing so he earned a sure place among the greatest composers produced by America.

Recommended recordings: “Stephen Foster Melodies (an album including *Uncle Ned*, *Beautiful Dreamer*, *Camptown Races*, *Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair*, *Oh Susanna*, *Old Black Joe*, *My Old Kentucky Home*, *Swanee River*, *Massa’s In de Cold Ground*, etc.) V-C2 (Victor Salon Group Orchestra—Shilkret).



# FRANCK

CÉSAR FRANCK, b. Liege, 1822. Studied at the Paris Conservatory, where he won several prizes. His first important work was the Biblical eclogue *Ruth*, composed in 1846. In 1858 he was appointed organist at Sainte-Clotilde in Paris, and in 1872 became professor of organ at the Conservatory. For most of his life he lived in retirement—indeed, in comparative obscurity and neglect, success coming to him for the first time only a few months before his death, with the performance of his Quartet. He died in Paris in 1890.

IF we accept Vincent d'Indy's division of Franck's artistic career into three periods, we must recognize that it was only in his last period that he produced the works that have made him an immortal. What he had composed up to his fiftieth year represented (with a few exceptions) his apprenticeship; it was only after that date that he began writing the works in which mastery and genius are patent.

The key to his music can be found in his personality. He was a man of the utmost humility, simplicity, and devout reverence; and it is these qualities that he asserts in his music. His best works are pervaded with reverence and mysticism; they reflect the other-worldly calmness of the organist who spent the happiest years of his life in the organ loft at Sainte-Clotilde. He was incapable of passion, of intensity, of spiritual or emotional conflicts. In his music we find only serenity and peace and brotherly love. His music, as Gustave Dérépas once wrote, "leads us from egoism to love, by the path of the true mysticism of Christianity; from the world to the soul, from the soul to God."

Analyzing Franck as a composer, Leland Hall wrote: "Like Brahms he has pronounced idiosyncrasies, among which his fondness for shifting harmonies is the most constantly obvious. . . . His melodies are almost invariably dissected; they are seldom built up in broad design. They are resolved into their finest motives, and as such are woven and twisted into the close iridescent harmonic fabric with bewildering skill. All is in subtle movement. Yet there is a complete absence of sensuousness, even, for the most part, of dramatic fire. The overpowering climaxes to which he builds are never a frenzy of emotion; they are superbly calm and exalted. The structure of his music is strangely inorganic. He adds phrase upon phrase, detail upon detail, with astonishing power to knit and weave closely what comes with what went before. His extraordinary polyphonic skill seems inborn, native to the man."

Franck's important works are marked by a technical device which he developed to produce unity: the "cyclical form"—which means that he builds his principal melodic subjects out of a single germinal idea and finally repeats all these principal themes in the last movement.

## CHORAL MUSIC

*Les Béatitudes*

Franck greatly admired Ernest Renan's *Life of Christ*, and it is probable that Renan's eloquent narrative of the delivery of the Sermon on the Mount inspired Franck to set the latter to music. He spent ten years (1869-79) on what he considered the crowning work of his career, and into it he poured some of his most spiritual music.

On completing his oratorio *The Béatitudes*, he was eager to introduce it to the leading musicians of France, and therefore arranged a special performance of several of its sections at his home, himself officiating at the piano. The directors of the Conservatory, the Minister of Fine Arts, and leading critics were invited. Fate was against Franck, however: on the day before the performance he sprained his hand and was forced to delegate to a pupil the task of accompanying. Then, at the last moment, the Conservatory directors and the Minister of Fine Arts sent polite regrets: they could not come. A few critics did come, only to slip quietly out of the room before the music was finished. Such a fiasco—and to a work so near and dear to him—almost broke Franck's heart.

It was not until about fifteen years later that *Les Béatitudes* was introduced in its entirety in Paris, under the baton of Édouard Colonne, and it was greeted with enthusiasm by public and critics alike. Today, there are many critics who consider it the greatest of Franck's works, the one in which he strove for and achieved the highest altitudes of his inspiration. In the words of Ernest Chausson, it "certainly surpassed all other French music in sublimity. One would indeed have to go back to the very first classical masters to find so powerful an expression of the soul's despair, its appeal to divine justice, its striving after the ideal, after holiness."

*Les Béatitudes* consists of a Prologue and eight Beatitudes. The Prologue creates at once the mood of sublimity that permeates the entire work. The eight Beatitudes that follow are subtitled as follows: I. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"; II. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth"; III. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted"; IV. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled"; V. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy"; VI. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"; VII. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the Children of God"; VIII. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."

The work is suffused with a kind of seraphic tranquillity, illumined by a divine glow. In no other Franck composition—not even in his Quartet or his Quintet—is the sublimity so continuously sustained in music of incomparable eloquence. With a mastery of polyphony, a gentle flow of lyricism, and a re-

markable genius of organic construction, Franck here composed a work in which his noble and devout soul found unforgettable expression.

Recommended recording: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness," C-D15121 (Thill).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Le Chasseur maudit*

Inspired by the ballad of the German poet Gottfried August Bürger, Franck composed his eloquent tone poem in 1883, and it was introduced by the Société Nationale on March 31, 1883.

The composition is in four sections and follows closely the program appended by Franck to the score.

I. "It was Sunday morning; in the distance there sounded the joyous ringing of the bells and the religious chants of the crowd—Sacrilege! The savage Count of the Rhine has sounded his horn."

II. "Hallo! Hallo! The hunt takes its course over grain fields, over meadow and moor. . . . Stop, Count, I beg you. Listen to the pious singing— No!—Hallo! Hallo!—Stop, Count, I entreat you. Take care— No!—and the chase goes hurtling on its way like a whirlwind."

III. "All of a sudden the Count finds himself alone; his horse is loath to go further. The Count blows into his horn, but it will not sound again. . . . A voice dismal, implacable, curses him: 'Sacrilegious man,' it cries, 'be hunted forever by hell itself!'"

IV. "Then the flames leap up from all directions—the Count, seized by terror, flees, faster, always faster, pursued by a pack of demons . . . by day-time across abysses, at midnight through the air."

### *Variations symphoniques*

In 1885, Franck composed this remarkable set of variations for piano and orchestra, a work that proved his ability to write with equal independence for orchestra and for a solo instrument. The *Variations symphoniques* is not a concerto in the sense that a solo instrument speaks against an orchestral background; rather the piano and the orchestra collaborate, being treated with equal significance and imagination.

"Several features of this work," wrote Albert E. Wier, "require special attention, notably the pianistic treatment of the first variation; the wider spacing of certain passages and the mystical delineation of inner parts; the flowing figures over the 'cello solo with the rich suggestion of secondary voices; and the brilliant effect produced by the treatment of chords near the close. The importance of the second theme, announced in an exceedingly impressive solo passage in C sharp minor, is another important departure from the customary procedure in a work of this type. The variations on the second theme, which

are combined frequently with those on the first theme, give the entire work the character of a set of double variations. The great complexity of the treatment . . . testifies to Franck's great theoretical knowledge, and the nobility of his subjects is convincing evidence of his extraordinary musical genius."

Recommended recording: CM-X10 (Gieseking; London Philharmonic—Wood)

## PIANO MUSIC

### *Prelude, Chorale, and Fugue*

In this piano work, Franck attempted to recreate the spirit of the Bach of the Preludes and Fugues. But, except for the extraordinary polyphonic skill of the Fugue—in which the three principal themes of the work are developed in a monumental triple counterpoint—the music has more of Franck's mysticism in it than of Bach's nobility and grandeur. A theme of majesty introduces the Prelude, followed by a second theme more passionate in nature; it is this second theme of the Prelude that provides a subject for the Fugue. The Chorale, also built on two themes, is characteristic Franck music, serene and contemplative, and strongly suggestive of organ colors and sonorities. The Chorale, too, provides a thematic subject for the concluding Fugue, which comes as a magnificent summation and climax.

Recommended recording: VM-1004 (Rubinstein).

## QUARTET

### *Quartet in D major*

It is with his String Quartet, composed in 1889, that Franck realized one of the few successes of his career. On April 19, 1890, the Société Nationale de Musique introduced the work to such unqualified enthusiasm that Franck was tempted to say simply, "The public is beginning to understand me."

It is not difficult to understand the success of the D major Quartet, for it is one of Franck's masterpieces, and one of the most consistently eloquent of his works. As Harvey Grace wrote: "Perhaps no work gives us so much of the very essence of Franck as the Quartet, especially in the opening movement, where the reflective mood, the beautiful polyphony, and the quiet fugal section remind us of the Beethoven of the later quartets. The scherzo is lightness and gaiety itself. Despite the beauty of its main theme, the larghetto falls a trifle short, perhaps; it is inclined to squareness of phrase, and there are too many full closes. The finale is ushered in by a parade of themes from the preceding movements, after the manner of Beethoven in the Ninth Symphony. . . . The Quartet as a whole is a genuinely inspired work, and, page for page, it contains perhaps more sheer loveliness of sound than any other piece of its kind."

Recommended recording: VM-259 (Pro-Arte).

## QUINTET

*Quintet in F minor*

The Quintet preceded the Quartet by ten years, and was the first of Franck's chamber-music works to betray his beautiful transparency and lucidity in ensemble writing, and his tendency to treat the quartet as a single voice rather than as four independent voices.

"In the F minor Quintet," wrote W. W. Cobbett, "we find the application, now conscious, of the system of composition based on one or more cyclic themes. . . . A melody, in the highest degree expressive, hovers over the three movements of the work and gives it the necessary cohesion. . . . It is this theme which raises itself aloft, in the middle of the second movement (Lento), like a peak towards which the character-theme of the movement has directed its toilsome march, and from which it then descends to breathe out its life at the end in a sigh of grief. . . . In the finale, this fine theme is called upon to fill the office of regulator only at the end of the cycle . . . with the object of setting all in order and of bringing back to the fold such of the other themes as may have strayed from the path. . . . Is it necessary to add that the beauty of the themes and the masterly skill with which Franck's architecture displays them make the F minor Quintet a monument of imperishable grandeur and strength?"

Recommended recording: CM-334 (Roth Quartet; Schmitz).

## SONATA

*Sonata in A major*

The Violin Sonata, composed in 1886 and introduced by Eugene Ysaÿe (to whom it is dedicated), combines mysticism and religious exaltation in the best Franck vein. The first movement is in modified sonata-form in which the development section is omitted and the exposition is promptly followed by the recapitulation. The movement opens with a subject expressive of great yearning spoken by the violin; this mood is sustained with the second theme. The movement passes through a period of gentle agitation which subsides at last in tranquillity and peace. The second movement (Allegro) is turbulent with strife, and is one of the few Franck pages of unrest. The third movement (Recitativo-Fantasia) is a free rhapsodic development of subjects proposed alternately by the violin and the piano in a sort of dialogue. The closing movement (Allegretto poco mosso) is music of rare calmness and spiritual beauty, opening with a subject which is first announced by the piano and is then taken up by the violin in canon style.

The Sonata is chamber-music writing of the utmost purity in which the two instruments are beautifully adjusted to one another. D'Indy finds a single basic idea dominating the entire work: a rising and falling inflection which characterizes the principal thematic material of all four movements.

Recommended recording: VM-449 (Heifetz; Rubinstein).

## SYMPHONY

*Symphony in D minor*

Franck's Symphony, composed in 1888, was introduced by the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, under the direction of Jules Garcin, on February 17, 1889. That première was a fiasco. In the first place, the musicians of the orchestra were against the new work and approached it contemptuously. They made their objections strongly articulate, at times during the rehearsal refusing to go on. Only the firmness and insistence of the conductor carried the work from rehearsal to performance. Nor were the subscribers any more sympathetic; the general public and the leading musicians of Paris expressed their disapproval in no uncertain terms. The director of the Conservatory shouted: "This is no symphony. Who ever heard of a symphony with an English horn?" Gounod found the work an "affirmation of impotence pushed to dogma."

Yet, from such ignoble beginnings, the symphony grew to become one of the favorites in the symphonic repertoire, and the best loved of Franck's works. Today, of course, it is accepted as a masterpiece. D'Indy aptly described it as "the majestic, plastic, and perfectly beautiful symphony," adding that it is "a continual ascent towards pure gladness and life-giving light because its workmanship is solid and its themes are manifestations of ideal beauty. What is more joyous, more sanely vital, than the principal subject of the finale around which all the other themes in the work cluster and crystallize?"

The symphony opens with a Lento, a majestic introduction in which the principal subject of the movement is stated at once by the basses (a theme curiously reminiscent of a motive from Wagner, and also of the opening theme of Liszt's *Les Préludes*). The Lento builds great dramatic suspense, growing in intensity and mystery until, finally, the Allegro non troppo bursts forth triumphantly. In the second movement, first the pizzicati of strings and harp, then a contrapuntal subject in the 'cellos, form backgrounds to a melody of rare sweetness voiced by the English horn. Strange that the musical pundits of Franck's time should have been so upset by the introduction of the English horn into the symphonic texture as to remain deaf to the beauty and tenderness and compassion of this music! A counter subject, equally eloquent, and a sprightly Scherzo, complete the principal melodic subjects of the movement. A joyful and spirited Allegro non troppo concludes the symphony—a movement in which the principal themes of the preceding movements are briefly reviewed.

Recommended recording: VM-840 (San Francisco Symphony—Monteux).

# FRANZ

ROBERT FRANZ, b. Halle, 1815. Studied with Schneider at Dessau, later adding philosophy and literature to his music studies. Schumann and Mendelssohn first recognized his talent, and through Schumann's influence his first songs were published. He taught music at the University of Halle, and was head of the Singakademie there until he became deaf. He then turned to editing the works of Bach and Handel, and was awarded two hundred thalers annually by the King. He died in Halle in 1892.

WITH the exception of a few choral numbers, Robert Franz devoted himself exclusively to the writing of *Lieder*. In this field he stands with the immortals, ranking with the greatest *Lieder* composers of the 19th century, almost equal in stature to Schubert, Brahms, Schumann, and Hugo Wolf. "He carried the German *Lied*," wrote W. F. Apthorp, "to its highest known pitch of perfection. Uniting the purely lyric element one finds in such splendor in Schubert with the wondrously subtle and mobile expressiveness of every varying shade of emotion that characterized Schumann, fusing these two elements so that their union was absolutely . . . complete, Franz gave the finishing master touch to the plastic form of the *Lied*."

## SONGS

Robert Franz composed about 350 songs, the following being among the most famous: *Die Lotosblume*, *Mutter*, *O Sing mich zur Ruh*, *Im Rhein*, *Stille Sicherheit*, *Die Widmung*, *Marie am Fenster*, and *In meinem Auge*.

Analyzing his extraordinary output of songs, Henry T. Finck is first of all "impressed by the reticence, dignity, and purity of their style. They are true lyrics—expressions of personal feeling in simple, well-balanced musical forms, undisfigured by dramatic episodes, obtrusive climaxes, or any of those other devices of less fastidious song writers. . . . He cared primarily, not for luxuriance of decoration, but for structural symmetry and harmony; not for an emotionality bordering on hysteria, but for the calm expression of sincere, simple feeling; not for utter self-revelation but for a dignified presentation of what was artistically worth presentation, against a background of reticence and reserve. . . . In simplicity, and graciousness of melody, in musicianly part-writing and in legitimately expressive harmony, Franz is pre-eminent."

"Franz's songs," wrote Apthorp, "are as truly lyrical, in the most exact sense of the word, as Schubert's; at the same time, they are to the full as emotionally expressive, as picturesquely and poetically suggestive, as vivid pieces of tone-painting, as Schumann's. And more than this, he has given them the most stoutly organized, pure and concise forms known in song-writing. To what Schubert and Schumann did before him, Franz brought the natural and logical completion; he crowned the edifice."

Recommended recordings: *Für Musik*, V-1861 (Lehmann); *Gute Nacht*, V-1861 (Lehmann); *Im Herbst*, V-15645 (Flagstad); *Marie am Fenster*, V-11829 (Thibault); *Stille Sicherheit*, V-2179 (Crooks); *Widmung*, V-2176 (Crooks).

# GERSHWIN

GEORGE GERSHWIN, b. Brooklyn, New York, 1898. Studied with Charles Hambitzer, and later with Rubin Goldmark. He worked as a song-plugger in Remick's, composing his first song hit and his first musical-comedy score both in 1919. In 1924 his *Rhapsody in Blue*, introduced by Paul Whiteman, made him world-famous. During the next decade he divided his talents equally between popular and serious music, enjoying great success in both fields. During the closing years of his life, he worked for Hollywood. He died in Hollywood in 1937.

MORE conspicuously than any other single composer, George Gershwin proved that jazz could be used with serious purpose in larger musical compositions. This was his greatest contribution to music, and the one that will make his name live. True, as a composer he had palpable faults, largely due to inadequate technical training: His structure was usually rambling; he showed little ability in developing his ideas; his harmonic language is often elementary. But his innate gifts were unmistakably rich. Above everything else, Gershwin had melody: the tunes in his songs, and the thematic ideas in his larger works are lyrically fresh, seductive, enchanting. Both as man and as composer he had vitality; his music is today as brilliantly alive and vigorous as it was on the day he composed it. Occasionally, his sure instinct overcame every technical shortcoming to achieve effects of deathless beauty and poignancy, so that a considerable part of his music constitutes a permanent contribution to American culture.

## CONCERTO

### *Concerto in F*

The effectiveness with which Gershwin had composed for piano and orchestra in his *Rhapsody in Blue* inspired Walter Damrosch, then conductor of the New York Symphony Society, to commission him to write a jazz piano concerto—though Gershwin then (in 1925) knew so little about concerto-writing that after signing the contract he bought a textbook so as to find out what a concerto was! On finishing the first draft, he decided to orchestrate it himself—as he had not done in the case of the *Rhapsody*. Then he hired a special orchestra to play it for him under the direction of his friend Bill Daly, and was thus enabled to hear it in actual performance and to make important revisions and corrections.

The *Concerto in F* was introduced at Carnegie Hall, New York, on Decem-



ber 3, 1925, Damrosch conducting the New York Symphony Society and the composer playing the piano part. Damrosch himself described Gershwin's achievement as follows: "Various composers have been walking around jazz like a cat around a plate of hot soup, waiting for it to cool off, so that they could enjoy it without burning their tongues, hitherto accustomed only to the more tepid liquid distilled by cooks of the classical school. Lady Jazz, adorned with her intriguing rhythms, has danced her way round the world. . . . But for all her travels and her sweeping popularity, she has encountered no knight who could lift her to a level that would enable her to be received as a respectable member in musical circles. George Gershwin seems to have accomplished this miracle. He has done it boldly, by dressing this extremely independent and up-to-date young lady in the classic garb of a concerto. Yet he has not detracted one whit from her fascinating personality."

The Concerto, opening with a Charleston rhythm, is filled with jazz syncopations and "blues" melodies. Perhaps its chief importance lies in the proof it offered—and for the first time—that jazz idioms can be used gracefully in the classic concerto form. But the work has other admirable qualities. Though frequently conventional, structurally formless, and none too well integrated, it contains such a wealth of fresh ideas, projected with so much robustness and vitality, that it is undeniably music of moving beauty—particularly in the slow movement, with its casual reminiscence of Debussy; and it is *American* music, American to its very core. "His shortcomings," said Samuel Chotzinoff in an admiring review of the performance, "are nothing in the face of the one thing he alone of all those writing the music of today possesses. He alone expresses us. He is the present, with all its audacity, impertinence, its feverish delight, in its motion, its lapses into rhythmically exotic melancholy."

Some years ago, when the famous English conductor Albert Coates compiled a list of the fifty best musical works of our times, only one American composition was included: Gershwin's *Concerto in F*.

Recommended recording: VM-690 (Sanromá; Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler).

## OPERA

### *Porgy and Bess*

In three acts, libretto by Ira Gershwin and Dubose Heyward, first performed in Boston on September 30, 1935; first New York performance at the Alvin Theater on October 10, 1935.

When Gershwin decided to write an opera based on Dubose Heyward's successful play *Porgy*, he went to Charleston, South Carolina, to absorb local atmosphere. There, in the company of Mr. Heyward, he not only visited Catfish Row, the scene of the play, but also heard (and participated in) the actual "Shouts" of the Gullah Negroes on James Island. Having thus saturated himself in Negro music, he was able to incorporate many of its genuine char-

acteristics into his opera. For although the work contains no actual Negro melodies, Gershwin had equipped himself to write with such authenticity that its songs give the impression of being age-old songs handed down from generations of Negroes. In his rhythms—frequently savage—he recreated the Gullah “Shouts”; fragments of melody, with strange intervals, reproduced the street cries of Negro vendors in Charleston; and many a beautiful flowing song recaptures the poignancy and pain of the Spiritual.

It took Gershwin eleven months to write his score, and another nine months to orchestrate it. Finally, in 1935, it was tried out in Boston, and then introduced to New York. The all-Negro cast included Todd Duncan and Anne Brown; and the conductor was Alexander Smallens.

In *Porgy and Bess* Gershwin aimed at creating a folk tale of the South. “Its people naturally would sing folk music,” he explained. “When I first began work on the music I decided against the use of original folk material because I wanted the music to be all of one piece. Therefore I wrote my own Spirituals and folk songs. But they are still folk music—and therefore, being operatic in form, *Porgy and Bess* becomes a folk opera.” Certainly Gershwin succeeded in his aim. *Porgy and Bess* is the American equivalent of *Boris Godunov* and *The Bartered Bride*—so American in its every note that it could not conceivably have been written by anyone but an American.

“The musical influence of Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess*,” wrote J. Rosamund Johnson, “will live through the ages and the transitions of musical vogues as a fountain of inspiration to writers. Some may differ at great length with his unusual style; nevertheless, the example and magnitude of this young man’s musical exposition and development of folklore, emanating from street cries, blues, and plantation songs of the Negro, will prove itself a beacon of light to those who are brave enough to stray from the standard of the great masters of Europe.”

It cannot be said that *Porgy and Bess* was successful when first introduced. Many in the audience were puzzled by its form. Certain critics felt that it was a hybrid product—neither opera nor musical comedy. Some of them said it was too realistic to be an opera (Gershwin even included a crap-game, to the musical accompaniment of a fugue!); while others called it too pretentious to be a good musical comedy. Subsequently, however, *Porgy and Bess* earned the high place it deserves in American opera. It has been accepted as Gershwin’s greatest work, and, more important still, as one of the great achievements in American opera. In 1937, it received the David Bispham Silver Medal as an outstanding achievement in the field of American opera. In 1942 its revival in New York was a triumph, enjoying the longest “run” ever known by any revival on Broadway; and the Music Critics’ Circle selected it as the most important musical revival of the year.

*Porgy and Bess* is by no means a coherent and consistent masterpiece. There are lapses in its inspiration, passages that succumb to heavy-handed dullness; there are awkward constructions, trite clichés. But the opera is

freshly conceived; it is original; it abounds in melodies; it has moments of captivating wit; and it is a consistent joy to the ear. In certain passages—the Wake Scene, for instance, and the closing scene—Gershwin approaches true greatness as a creative artist. Here the intensity of speech, the dramatic poignancy, the power and strength of the musical language, all prove that in this work he had developed from being an intriguing jazz composer into being a great American composer.

The libretto follows the original Heyward play closely. The crippled Porgy, beggar in Charleston, loves the prostitute Bess, whom he takes into his home and raises to respectability. A singular attachment arises between the two. Eventually, however, Bess is seduced by Sportin' Life to abandon Porgy and to go with him to New York. And in the closing scene of the opera Porgy is seen climbing into his goat-cart to follow his beloved to New York.

The best-known melodies from *Porgy and Bess* include "Summertime," "I Got Plenty of Nuttin'," "My Man's Gone Now," "Bess, You Is My Woman Now," and "It Ain't Necessarily So."

Recommended recordings: excerpts, V-C25 (Jepson; Tibbett; Orchestra—Smallens); *Porgy and Bess*—A Symphonic Picture, CM-572 (Pittsburgh Symphony—Reiner).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *An American in Paris*

In the spring of 1928, Gershwin went to Europe for a vacation and while there he composed his symphonic poem, *An American in Paris*. His aim here was twofold: he wanted to interpret the effervescence and gaiety of Paris, but—still more—he wanted to suggest an American's nostalgia for his own country as he walks along the Parisian boulevards.

Gershwin wrote most of the score at the Hotel Bristol in Vienna, completing the orchestration in Paris. The work is one of the most descriptive that he ever wrote, and the music eloquently sets forth his program. The opening theme denotes an American walking jauntily along the boulevards, swinging a cane as he goes. He is obviously confused by rushing taxicabs, for we soon hear the peculiar squeaks of the Paris taxicab horns (actual taxicab horns are used in the orchestration). Later on, a beautiful "blues" melody depicts the American's homesickness. Throughout, the work is vivacious, sprightly, and frothy. It was introduced by Walter Damrosch and the New York Philharmonic-Symphony on December 13, 1928, when Samuel Chotzinoff called it "the best piece of modern music since Mr. Gershwin's *Concerto in F*."

Recommended recording: CX-246 (New York Philharmonic—Rodzinski).

### *Rhapsody in Blue*

The history of Gershwin's masterpiece is so well known that it is needful here only to touch on the salient facts. Composed in 1924 for Paul White-

man's all-American music concert, given in Aeolian Hall on February 12, 1924, it was Gershwin's first essay in a large musical form. The triumph of Whiteman's concert, it made Gershwin famous throughout the entire world. The audience was demonstrative in its enthusiasm, and the critics were equally cordial. Deems Taylor wrote that the *Rhapsody* "reveals a melodic gift and a piquant and individual harmonic sense to lend significance to its rhythmic ingenuity. Moreover, it is genuine jazz music, not only in its scoring, but in its idiom." Henry T. Finck said that Gershwin was "far superior to Schönberg, Milhaud, and the rest of the futurist fellows," while Henry O. Osgood insisted that it was "a more important contribution to music than Stravinsky's *Rites of Spring*."

It became almost overnight the most famous American work for symphony orchestra, and the best loved. From the sale of records and sheet music, and from performance royalties, Gershwin earned more than a million dollars. It was arranged for solo piano, two pianos, eight pianos; for solo harmonica, for harmonica orchestra, for mandolin orchestra, and for chorus. It was bought for the screen, it was featured in a stage production at Roxy's. It was adapted for a tap dance by Jack Donahue, and as a ballet. In 1942, it was performed by Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Symphony—after having been performed by most of the leading American symphony orchestras under most of the leading conductors.

Despite technical defects, the music brims with such deathless vitality that it remains today as alive, as fresh, as full of charm, as it was on the day it was first heard. Elsewhere this editor has written: "The principal themes are striking for their originality, dash, voltaic energy; because they were fired with the spark of true genius, they still glow hot and warm us each time we listen to them. Take, for example, the very opening clarinet wail (for which Gershwin, in collaboration with Ross Gorman, had to evolve a new technique for playing the clarinet)—as marked a touch of genius in setting forth the mood and atmosphere of the entire work as, say, the volcanic opening bars of Strauss's *Don Juan*. Or the rhythmic patterns, whose ingenious subtlety gives the music its irresistible dynamism. But beyond this, the music moves with a lusty pace from the opening clarinet subject to the exciting coda which brings the work to a close. It never lags. It never falls into monotony. From the first bar to the last it remains music of high tensions, alive with electric currents. Gershwin did not, in this work, sound any one string exclusively; the *Rhapsody* has a variety of mood and atmosphere. It is, of course, brilliantly witty and satiric. But it is more than that. It has its moments of intense drama; moments of introspection, as in some of the piano cadenzas; moments of tender beauty, the most unforgettable of which is the famous slow section. The pages of hilarity and jovial abandon are beautifully tempered by other pages of rare grace and charm. Most important of all, the *Rhapsody* is an American musical expression, so authentically conceived, and projected with

such raciness and tang, that we feel when we listen to it that a part of all of us has been caught there."

Recommended recording: CX-251 (Levant; Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy).

# GILBERT

HENRY F. GILBERT, b. Somerville, Mass., 1868, a pupil of Macdowell. For ten years he was engaged in business, devoting only leisure hours to composition. Developing a passionate interest in American folk music, he became in 1901 a vital figure in a movement to propagandize Indian and Negro music. Following an attack of typhoid in 1901, it was discovered in 1906 that the disease had weakened his heart. However, he lived on for another two decades, and during that time produced his best music. In 1927 he was one of the two American composers representing the United States at the International Music Festival in Frankfurt. He died in Cambridge in 1928.

FOLK idioms greatly influenced Gilbert's musical writing. From the very first, he strove to write indigenous American music, building his best works on native Negro melodies or Indian themes or popular folk music drawn from the storehouse of America's past. He was, wrote Isaac Goldberg, "a Thoreau in tone. Historically, he appeared to have come too late. . . . A genuinely national composer, indeed, may have to retrace some of the ground that Gilbert covered, and may discover that Gilbert came early after all. His Americanism was an organic phase of his sincerity, his independence, his wholeness; these qualities represent, perhaps, his chief meaning for those who are to follow."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Comedy Overture on Negro Themes*

It was with this work that Gilbert achieved his first success as a composer, following its performance in Boston and New York in 1911. Originally intended as a prelude to an operetta built around Joel Chandler Harris's *Uncle Remus*, it was redeveloped by the composer into a symphonic work when he learned that the stage rights to the book had already been assigned. The work is built around three principal Negro melodies: the first, from the Bahamas; the second, a tune sung by the roustabouts on the Mississippi wharves, *I'se Gwine to Alabamy*; and the middle section *Old Ship of Zion* is worked into a witty fugue.

In discussing this *Comedy Overture*, generally accepted as Gilbert's masterpiece, Olin Downes wrote: "It is characteristic in every measure of the com-

poser, and it is a substantial justification of his theories and practices. . . . Those who analyze the thematic material of the *Comedy Overture* will find that the thematic material as well as its development appears as the very fabric of the composer's thought. . . . In its rhythmical impulse born of the fragment of the Spiritual, its shrewd wit, its infectious laughter, it announces itself as a piece of craft which could have come from nowhere but America."

### *Dance in Place Congo*

Gilbert composed this orchestral work in 1906, but was so convinced of its dramatic and rhythmic qualities that in 1918 he converted it into a ballet (introduced at the Metropolitan Opera House on March 23, 1918). The score is built around five songs native to the Louisiana Creoles. "This," wrote John Tasker Howard, "is one of Gilbert's best works. The tropical grace of the Creole tunes is subtly emphasized, while the gloomy, tragic note of the slave dances in the old Place Congo of New Orleans forms a weird and fantastic background. First comes the Bamboula, then some light moments which rise to frenzy, interrupted at last by the booming of the great bell that summons the slaves back to their quarters. Then a pause and a cry of despair."

## GIORDANO

UMBERTO GIORDANO, b. Foggia, Italy, 1867. Studied for nine years at the Naples Conservatory, where he composed his first opera. He became famous in 1896 with *Andrea Chénier*, maintaining his success with other popular operas, of which *Fedora* and *Madame Sans-Gêne* are the best known.

THOUGH he possesses a lyric gift that is very fertile, it cannot be said that Giordano is a great composer or a very original one. He tends towards superficiality, and satisfies himself easily with second-rate expressions and occasional clichés. Yet he has a good sense of the theater and a natural aptitude in writing for voices. His *Fedora* and *Madame Sans-Gêne* enjoy great popularity in major opera houses everywhere; but it is generally conceded that *Andrea Chénier* is his magnum opus.

### OPERA

#### *Andrea Chénier*

In four acts, book by Luigi Illica, first performance at La Scala, Milan, on March 23, 1896.

Giordano was still an obscure composer when he wrote *Andrea Chénier*.

Before this opera attained performance, Giordano had reached a low ebb in his personal fortunes. He had produced a few insignificant operas, but they had been failures and he was financially insolvent. When, therefore, *Andrea Chénier* was accepted for performance by La Scala he told his friends: "This is my last card. If this opera is not a success, I shall play no more."

*Andrea Chénier* proved to be such an overwhelming triumph at its première that, overnight, Giordano was transformed from an obscure composer into a famous one. It was soon produced in leading opera houses, spreading the composer's reputation throughout Europe.

It is not an original opera, and it thrives upon obvious effects, but it is richly and warmly melodic and has won the love of opera audiences everywhere. R. A. Streatfeild thus summarizes its strengths and weaknesses: "Giordano has an exuberant gift of melody and a strong feeling for dramatic effect, but his score lacks solidity, and in his music the usual theatrical tricks for extorting applause too often take the place of a sincere expression of emotion."

The opera is built around the romantic figure of André Chénier, the well-known poet of the French Revolution. Chénier and Gérard (an officer in the people's army) are in love with the same girl, Madeleine, daughter of a countess. Chénier receives a secret note to meet Madeleine at a rendezvous. Gérard follows him, challenges Chénier to a duel, and wounds him. Chénier is imprisoned, but Madeleine offers herself to Gérard in exchange for Chénier's life. Her pleas fall on deaf ears. While Chénier is in prison writing his last poem, Madeleine enters his cell, having had her name substituted on the condemned list for that of another, and accepting imprisonment gracefully. Chénier and Madeleine die together—victims of the Revolution.

It is of interest to learn that, with *Andrea Chénier*, Giordano won not only fame and fortune, but a wife as well. While still obscure, he had been courting the daughter of a Milan hotel proprietor who was willing to have his girl marry Giordano but only if he had talent. To decide the issue, the proprietor took the unfinished score of *Andrea Chénier* to Verdi for his opinion. Two days later, Verdi returned the score to the hotel with the following note: "You may safely confide your daughter to the man who composed a work such as this." And shortly afterward the two were married.

The best-known excerpts from *Andrea Chénier* include the tenor aria, "*Un di all' azzurro spazio*," from Act I; the baritone aria, "*Un di m'era di gioia*," and the soprano aria, "*La Mamma morta*," from Act III; and the aria for tenor, "*Comme un bel di Maggio*," from Act IV.

Recommended recording: C-Opera Set 21 (La Scala Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra—Molajoli).

# GLAZUNOV

ALEXANDER GLAZUNOV, b. St. Petersburg, 1865. Studied with Rimsky-Korsakov. In 1882, his first symphony was introduced by Balakirev, and by 1890 his fame as a composer had spread throughout Europe. In 1900 he was appointed professor at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, beginning a long and rich career as a teacher. He remained in Russia after the outbreak of the Revolution. He died in Paris in 1936.

GLAZUNOV wrote in many different forms and in all of them equally well. No revolutionist or experimenter, he was satisfied with the accepted forms and rules. He is to be reckoned, as Montagu-Nathan pointed out, "as representing the orthodox in music, but he represents the orthodox in many phases. In his first orchestral overture based on Greek themes, the 'little Glinka' has followed his precursor in employing crude folk songs as symphonic-thematic material. . . . The later symphonies show that he can write music which, far from being less interesting than his programmatic works, have a strength and a beauty that have yet to be estimated at their true value as examples of Russian music."

## BALLET

### *The Seasons*

In one act and four scenes, book by Marius Petipa, introduced at the Hermitage Theater in St. Petersburg on February 23, 1900.

In his music for this ballet, Op. 67, Glazunov has offered a beautiful tonal interpretation of the four seasons of the year. The four scenes of the ballet are devoted to the four seasons. The first is Winter, who frolics with his companions, Hoar-Frost, Ice, Hail, and Snow. Two gnomes enter and set fire to a few fagots. Not liking fire, Winter vanishes, followed by his companions. The second scene is descriptive of Spring. Escorted by Zephyr, Birds, and Flowers, Spring enters to join the Flower-Fairies and a Bird in a dance of joy. In the third scene Summer is pictured by a cornfield in which the Flowers dance until they become weary. The Corn Spirit begins to dance with the Naiads. Satyrs and Fauns, with their pipes, try to kidnap the Corn Spirit, who is shielded by the Flowers, but fail when Zephyr comes to the rescue. Autumnal colors predominate in the last scene, in which Bacchantes dance beneath falling leaves, and in which all the Seasons join.

An orchestral suite comprising the most important music of the ballet has become famous at symphony concerts. It is in four movements, each movement named after the season which it describes.

Recommended recording: suite, CM-284 (Symphony Orchestra—Glazunov).



## CONCERTO

*Violin Concerto in A minor*

Glazunov's famous violin concerto, Op. 82, is characteristic of his best work. It is pleasing melodically, soundly constructed, well written for the solo instrument; yet for the most part it remains music more charming than important, and more ingratiating than original. Glazunov composed it in 1904-5, dedicating it to Leopold Auer, who introduced it at a concert of the Imperial Music Society in St. Petersburg. It is in three movements. The principal subject of the first movement is heard in the very opening, announced by the solo violin—melancholy in feeling, nostalgic, and sentimental. The second movement is romantic, consisting of two main themes, both introduced by the solo violin. A protracted cadenza leads directly into the finale, the main theme of which appears in a dialogue between the trumpets and the solo violin. After a second melody, the music moves at a lusty pace to a joyous and spirited ending.

Recommended recording: VM-218 (Heifetz; London Philharmonic—Barbirolli).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

*Scènes de Ballet*

Composed in 1894, the *Scènes de Ballet*, Op. 52, was introduced by the Imperial Music Society in Moscow in 1895. The first performance of this tune-festive but slight work was the scene of a clash between those who liked it and those who did not. The second movement met such approval that it was encored. Another demonstration following the fourth movement was met by a counter-demonstration from those who were displeased. The enthusiasts won out, however, and the fourth movement was encored as well. The work is in eight movements: I. Prélude; II. Marionettes; III. Mazurka; IV. Scherzino; V. Pas d'action; VI. Danse orientale; VII. Valse; VIII. Polonaise. Graceful, gratifying to the ear, easily understood and appreciated, this work has become famous with salon orchestras and on programs of lighter classics.

Recommended recordings: "Marionettes," V-20914 (Victor Concert Orchestra—Bourdon); "Danse orientale," V-1335 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

*Stenka Razin*

Glazunov composed his tone poem *Stenka Razin*, Op. 13, in 1885, and it was first performed in 1889 at a concert of Russian Music at the Paris Exposition and conducted by Glazunov himself.

Stenka Razin was a famous Cossack plunderer of the seventeenth century who went from one town to another with his followers, pillaging, looting, burning, and killing. He was finally met by an army of the Tsar, headed by Prince Baryatinsky, and crushingly defeated. Captured, he was brought to

Moscow, where he was condemned to the same kind of punishment he had given his own victims.

Around this legend Glazunov embroiders his tone poem. The dreaded Stenka Razin comes down the Volga, devastating one village and town after another. In his beautifully outfitted canoe lies the Persian princess whom he has captured. The princess confides to those near her a dream in which she was drowned in the Volga. Stenka Razin is met by the Tsar's soldiers. Seeing his doom at hand, he drowns the princess in the Volga, exclaiming: "Never have I given the Volga a gift. I shall now give her one of my earthly treasures!"

Glazunov's tone poem comprises three main melodic subjects. The first, based on a folk melody *The Volga Boatman*, is descriptive of the great Russian river. The second theme, savage and passionate, is for Stenka Razin. The third subject, Oriental in its character, depicts the beautiful Persian princess.

Recommended recording: C-7202-3 (Brussels Conservatory Orchestra—Defauw).

## GLINKA

MICHAEL IVANOVICH GLINKA, b. Novospasskoe, in the Smolensk district, Russia, 1804. Studied piano with John Field, violin with Böhm, and harmony and orchestration by himself. In 1824 he entered the Civil Service, but later abandoned it for music. After travels in Europe he returned to St. Petersburg, where he composed his first masterpiece, *A Life for the Tsar*. Shortly after its production, he became choral director of the Imperial Chapel. The last years of his life were spent in extensive travels. He died in Berlin in 1857.

It might well be said that the history of Russian music begins officially with Glinka. He was the first Russian composer to be fired with the ideal of composing Russian music; and it was he who served as criterion and inspiration for all later nationalist Russian composers. "His claim to immortality," as summed up by M. Montagu-Nathan, "must rest upon his having unified the experience and aims of earlier and lesser composers in the accomplishment of his single purpose, that of placing Russian musical nationality on a firm basis."

But Glinka was important not only historically: he was a composer who could write lyrically, his melodies being usually original in their design and filled with charm and emotional appeal. "Glinka's talent is essentially supple and varied," wrote Hector Berlioz. "His style has the rare advantage of being able to adapt itself, at the composer's desire, to the exigencies and character of the subject treated. Glinka can be simple and even naïve without ever condescending to a vulgar phrase. His melodies take unexpected turns, and are built on periods which charm by their very strangeness. He is a great har-

monist, and uses the instruments with a care and an acquaintance with their most intimate resources which make his orchestra one of the most novel and vivacious modern orchestras that one could hear."

## OPERA

### *A Life for the Tsar*

In four acts and epilogue, book by Baron de Rosen, first performed at the St. Petersburg Opera on December 9, 1836.

In 1830, Glinka left Russia for travels in Europe. After a period of study in Italy, he went on to Berlin; and it was here that he was first inspired with the mission of dedicating his musical art to interpret his country. He himself confessed in his Memoirs that "homesickness led me little by little to write Russian music." "My most earnest desire," he wrote further, this time in a letter to a friend, "is to compose music which will make all my beloved fellow-countrymen feel quite at home and lead no one to allege that I strut about in borrowed plumes."

On his return to St. Petersburg, Glinka associated himself with a group of literary men (among them Pushkin and Gogol) whose discussions on art in general, and Russian art in particular, clarified his views on the nature of Russian music. It was due to these discussions that Glinka was stirred to write a native Russian opera. The poet Zhukovsky suggested *A Life for the Tsar* (which, under the title of *Ivan Sussanin*, had already been used as a dramatic text). The suggestion delighted Glinka, who urged Baron de Rosen to prepare a suitable libretto. Two years were required for the completion of the opera, and *A Life for the Tsar* was introduced at the Imperial Theater in St. Petersburg in 1836.

Its success was only moderate. In general, misunderstanding and derision were the sole welcome given to this epochal achievement. Because Glinka utilized folk material to give his music native flavor, some critics called his score as "coachman's music." A scattered few, however, realized that the work marked an important step forward in Russian music. As early as 1840, Prosper Mérimée wrote: "It is more than opera; it is a national epic. . . . Poetically as musically, it is a faithful account of all that Russia has suffered and sung."

The action of *A Life for the Tsar* takes place in seventeenth-century Russia, at a period when the country was being invaded by the Poles. The invaders resolve to capture the Tsar, and some of their leaders order the peasant Ivan Sussanin to betray the Tsar's hiding place. Ivan misdirects them, at the same time sending a warning to the Tsar. When the Poles realize that they have been duped, they kill Ivan, though not before the Tsar has escaped.

"There is very little in the score," wrote M. D. Calvocoressi, "which differs in any particular from the conventionalities of grand opera. Some of the

music is fine in spirit as well as workmanship, and a few passages are of epic grandeur. But one seeks in vain for evidences of the prophetic originality and highly imaginative beauty found in Glinka's second opera, *Ruslan and Ludmilla*. What remains a subject for wonder is Glinka's consummate skill, the purity and ease that characterize his utterances. He was . . . a born orchestrator; but the extent of experience revealed by *A Life for the Tsar*—the first attempt of a practically self-taught composer—is marvelous."

### *Ruslan and Ludmilla*

In five acts, based upon a poem of Pushkin, first performed at the St. Petersburg Opera on December 9, 1842.

Soon after the production of his first opera, *A Life for the Tsar*, Glinka became choral director of the Imperial Chapel. In connection with his duties he had often to travel through Little Russia and Finland in search of new voices for his chorus. It was during this period, and these travels, that he was developing his plans for his second work, an opera which he hoped would be even more Russian in texture and spirit than his first venture, an opera that would more successfully realize his ambitions for Russian music. Utilizing a poem of Pushkin adapted for him by numerous librettists, he composed *Ruslan and Ludmilla*. Its first performance, in 1842, was only moderately successful; it was too much the music of the future to be completely comprehended by its contemporaries. But when revived in 1859 it was given magnificent acclaim, and since then has been generally accepted as one of the great Russian operas of all time.

"*Ruslan and Ludmilla*," wrote César Cui, "is the product of a mature talent that has reached the final stages of development. Regarded as absolute music, *Ruslan* is a work of the first rank; and from this point of view it will bear comparison with the great operatic masterpieces. In it, Glinka marked out new paths and opened up horizons undreamed of before his time."

But the horizons, vast though they were, had their bounds in the immensity of Russia. The first truly Russian opera, *Ruslan*, exerted great influence on Balakirev, Cui, Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin and Mussorgsky, and consequently on Russian national music. Some of the elements of that music—the emphasis on regional color, music, beauty; the dramatization of Russian nationalism and tradition—are clearly discernible in *Ruslan*. Furthermore, it was in close touch with the literature and painting of the period and yet it expressed a simultaneous relation to the people and music of the time.

Three suitors seek the hand of the beautiful Ludmilla, daughter of Prince Svietozar; of the three, Ludmilla prefers Ruslan. On her wedding day she is kidnapped by a fourth lover, the Black Wizard Chernomor. Her father then offers Ludmilla in marriage to any one of the three suitors who shall rescue his daughter. The pursuit of the kidnapper by the three lovers forms the nucleus of the plot.

The overture to *Russlan and Ludmilla* is famous, and is undoubtedly the most celebrated and the most frequently performed of Glinka's music. "Farlaf's Rondo" from Act II is also well known.

Recommended recordings: Overture, V-4427 (Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler); "Farlaf's Rondo," V-7704 (Chaliapin).

## GLUCK

CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD RITTER VON GLUCK, b. Erasbach, near Berching, Upper Palatinate, 1714. In 1736 he went to Vienna, where he won the sponsorship of Prince Lobkowitz. Later, under the patronage of Prince Melzi, he was enabled to study for four years in Italy with Sammartini. Here he composed several successful operas. Returning to Vienna, he immediately established himself as a prominent composer. He was appointed Kapellmeister to the Empress Marie Theresa, holding the post for ten years. In 1760, he began collaborating with the poet Calzabigi, with whom he attempted to revolutionize opera through a series of operatic masterpieces beginning with *Orfeo*. This effort aroused antagonism in Vienna, and in 1773 he abandoned the Austrian capital for Paris. In Paris, cabals and intrigues were created against him, but he rose above them to conquer musical Paris decisively. The last years of his life were spent quietly in Vienna, in luxury and fame. He died in Vienna in 1787.

GLUCK was one of the great revolutionary figures in the world of opera. He might well be called the forerunner of Richard Wagner in the creation of the music drama, for in his greatest operas he rebelled against Italian conventions and formulas and strove for an artistic product in which the libretto and the music should be dependent on each other, merged with each other in an integrated artistic whole. He himself clearly enunciated his purpose as a composer of opera: "I endeavored to restrict music to its proper function, that of seconding the poetry by strengthening the expression of the sentiment and the interest of the situations without interrupting the action or weakening it by superfluous ornament. . . . I also thought that my chief endeavor should be to attain a grand simplicity, and consequently have avoided making a parade of difficulties at the cost of clearness."

Against what abuses was Gluck rebelling? First and foremost, the artificial librettos to which most Italian composers of the day wrote their music: stilted, defying credence, relying overmuch on pomp and pageantry. The favorite librettist of the chief Italian composers was Metastasio; but in Calzabigi, Gluck found a collaborator who could sympathize with his own theories of opera. Similarly, Gluck disapproved of the meretriciously decorated arias with which Italians cluttered their operas; in his own work he refused to apotheosize the singer; he objected to the ineffectual accompaniments of Italian opera, and to its lack of integration. In short, he was groping towards

an artistic work in which every element should be coordinated into unity. He sought to create a greater intimacy between music and text, to simplify his technique, to dramatize his accompaniments, and to subordinate the role of the singer to a position of lesser importance than that of the opera itself. And, in striving for these things, he was the precursor of Wagner.

"His achievement," wrote Paul Bekker, "consists in the fact that he thrust the doors open and allowed the daylight of human naturalness to fall upon the opera world of the time. In that light it was natural that many things should assume an aspect different from that which they had had under the half-light of the eunuch atmosphere that had hitherto obtained. Artistic virtuosity for its own sake gave way to a newly crystallizing purity of song. Reason and logic asserted their rights as men began to sing with their natural voices. Intellect and feeling of a clear and purified attitude toward art arose to form a critical conscience, which tested the art work for its possibilities in the light of the demands of a new ideal of form."

## OPERA

### *Alceste*

In two acts, libretto by Calzabigi, introduced at the Vienna Hofoper on December 26, 1767.

*Alceste* was the immediate successor to *Orfeo* (Gluck's first experiment in the writing of a new kind of opera), following it by five years. In *Alceste*, Gluck pursued his revolutionary methods more fearlessly and boldly than ever. The writing of *Alceste* cost him infinite pains, and brought him illness and exhaustion. He was determined to make his new opera a complete justification of his artistic aims.

As in *Orfeo*, the plot is simplicity itself. Alceste prays to Apollo on behalf of her dying husband Admetos. Apollo offers to save Admetos but only if the latter's allotted place in the nether world is assigned to someone else. Alceste offers herself. Admetos recovers, and Alceste comes to Hades to offer herself. Admetos, however, joins her, determined to share his fate. Heracles comes to their rescue. Apollo, appeased, relinquishes his victims and offers them his blessing.

*Alceste* (like *Orfeo*) was a hymn to the triumphant victory of love over death. Its music fared even more bravely towards the new world Gluck had previously explored in his earlier opera. From the first descending chords of the orchestra (like the implacable voice of Fate), it sounded a new dramatic note in operatic music. This was no empty overture, but an "intrada"—an introduction—announcing the theme of the work, integrally bound up with the character and mood of the opera itself. And there were pages in *Alceste* in which the music-drama reached high moments of realization, and none more moving or dramatic than the Chorus of the Spirits (consisting entirely of the note F repeated—an amazing adventure in simplicity and dramatic

force), or the justly famous "*Divinités du Styx*" with its astute changes of tempo and color. Small wonder that, many years later, Wagner spoke with humility of this work of Gluck's!

*Alceste* was not successful at its first performance in Vienna in 1767. But there were a few who were far-seeing enough to recognize its greatness. Sonnenfels was enthusiastic over an opera that could be "a serious work without men-sopranos, music without solfeggios, or, as I might rather say, without squealing, an Italian poem without turgidity and nonsense." But the public in general thought the opera a bore. One characteristic contemporary remark was that only a game of chess could fill "the void in these long recitatives."

Recommended recording: Overture, V-12041 (B.B.C. Symphony—Boult); "*Ah, malgré moi*," V-18218 (Bampton); "*Divinités du Styx*," V-17268 (Traubel); "*Non, ce n'est point un sacrifice*," V-18218 (Bampton).

### *Iphigénie en Aulide*

In three acts, libretto by Du Rollet, first performed at the Paris Opéra on April 19, 1774.

Discouraged by the Viennese failure of *Alceste* and of its successor *Paride ed Elena*, Gluck decided to abandon the Austrian capital. He had received repeated invitations from his one-time pupil, Marie Antoinette, to come to Paris. In 1773, therefore, he went to France, and on April 19, 1774, he introduced to the Paris public his first French opera—*Iphigénie en Aulide*.

Things did not go smoothly for Gluck in his first French venture. Everywhere he found antagonism and envy blocking his way, making his path more difficult. The singers he found to be incompetent; the orchestra, he said, was like "an old coach drawn by consumptive horses, and led by one deaf from birth"; the dancer Vestris insisted upon the inclusion of an irrelevant chaconne at the end of the opera. But for the personal intervention of Marie Antoinette, *Iphigenia in Aulis* might have never reached performance. But, once performed, it gripped Paris with its truth, force, originality, and inspiration. "At last, a great triumph!" wrote Marie Antoinette. "On the nineteenth, we had the first performance of Gluck's *Iphigénie*. I was carried away by it. We can find nothing else to talk about. You can scarcely imagine what excitement reigns in all minds in regard to this event. It is incredible." Each night the receipts at the Opéra exceeded five thousand livres—an unheard-of figure. In the salons, little else was discussed. So popular grew the opera that the ladies of Paris went so far as to adopt a hair-dress which they called *à l'Iphigénie*!

The story is based on the unfinished drama by Euripides. King Agamemnon having slain a stag sacred to Artemis, he and his people have incurred the wrath of that goddess, and the winds that would enable the Greek fleet to set forth for Troy refuse to blow. The goddess is to be appeased only by the sacrifice of Agamemnon's daughter Iphigenia. Her mother, Clytemnestra, begs Achilles to save the maiden, but the King

orders the sacrifice to proceed. As Achilles is about to rescue Iphigenia, Artemis appears and declares herself appeased; and Achilles clasps his bride in his arms as he departs for Troy with the winds now blowing favorably.

The overture to this opera has become famous on symphony programs, particularly in the adaptation made by Richard Wagner. Equally familiar are the ballet music, the baritone aria "*Diane impitoyable!*", and the March.

Recommended recordings: Overture, CM-X138 (C.B.S. Symphony—Barlow); Ballet Music, V-7321-2 (National Symphony—Damrosch).

### *Orfeo ed Euridice*

In four acts, book by Calzabigi, first performed at the Burgtheater in Vienna on October 5, 1762.

It was with *Orfeo* that Gluck first tested his theories of opera. To Calzabigi's strong and simple text and with characters drawn from Greek mythology, Gluck prepared music equally simple and direct. At the first performance, the distinguished audience included the Empress Maria Theresa and the nobility of Vienna. To that audience *Orfeo* was somewhat of a disappointment. The plot of the libretto seemed devoid of action; only three characters in all (with the chorus acting as a fourth) in a plot of almost elementary simplicity. The music was hardly more appealing; one or two arias seemed graceful, but the rest were too bare of decorations and intricate runs to please Vienna's taste. Besides, the piercing dissonances of the Hades scene sounded more like chaos than sonority to eighteenth-century ears.

It is a simple and eloquent story that Calzabigi fashioned for Gluck. Orfeo mourns the death of his beloved. He is permitted to go to the Underworld to find his loved one, but only on the condition that he does not look at her face as he leads her out. He passes to the Underworld, then on to the Elysian Fields, where he finds Eurydice. As he conducts her out of the lower world, she implores him to look at her. He finally does so, only to lose her once more. He is heartbroken, but Amor comes to tell him that the gods have taken pity on his plight and that Eurydice will be restored to him; and they are rejoined in the Temple of Love.

Equally poignant was the music Gluck fashioned for this text. Words and music were marvelously adjusted, each giving the other new shades of meaning. There was tone painting of the most vivid colors—such as the depiction of the horrors of Hades and of the blessedness of Elysium. Chorus and ballet became integral parts of the drama. Everywhere in the score there was simplicity, deep feeling, music of the heart. "There is no opera in the world's long list," wrote Henry Chorley, "which, with merely three female voices and a chorus, can return to the stage in days like ours to make the heart throb and the eyes water."

*Orfeo* was at first a failure (it was not to be successful for another two years) because it provided no spectacle for the eye and ear such as Vienna liked



to have in its opera; and Vienna was not ready to understand a human drama so profound and moving, or to appreciate a musical form that explored new horizons so fearlessly.

The most famous excerpts from *Orfeo* include the "Dance of the Furies," the "Dance of the Blessed Spirits," and the eloquent "*Che faro senza Euri-dice*" for soprano.

Recommended recording: slightly abridged, C-Opera Set 15 (Soloists, Vlasoff Chorus, and Orchestra—Tomasi).

## GOLDMARK

KARL GOLDMARK, b. Keszthely, Hungary, 1830. Entered the Vienna Conservatory in 1847, but his studies were aborted by the outbreak of revolution. He worked in several theater orchestras, but in 1857 turned exclusively to composition. He became well-known as composer and critic in Vienna, where he died in 1915.

GOLDMARK's compositorial style is marked by an Oriental disposition towards rich harmonic colors, sensuous orchestrations, and luscious melody. He had consummate technical mastery. Though he was neither an original composer nor a major influence, he produced pleasing music that deserves a permanent place in the repertory.

### OPERA

#### *The Queen of Sheba*

In four acts, book by Salomon Hermann von Mosenthal, first performed at the Burgtheater, Vienna, on March 10, 1875.

Goldmark worked several years on this opera, which he considered his masterpiece. After completing the score he sent it to the famous Viennese critic Hanslick who replied tartly that he regarded it as revealing no talent whatever. The composer then had difficulty getting a hearing for it; Mosenthal's libretto was theatrical enough to interest opera audiences, but it was some time before the proper authorities were convinced of the musical value of the score itself.

Eventually it was accepted for production by the Burgtheater, and when introduced there in 1875 was sensationally successful. The audience was delighted by its pageantry and color, and critics praised it warmly, one of them writing that it marked a "new era in opera." (To Richard Wagner, however, the work was a bitter disappointment; it saddened him, he said, because

it represented everything he had been fighting against in opera all his life.) And *The Queen of Sheba* has maintained its popularity. Up to 1925 it had been performed almost 250 times in Vienna, and it has been given magnificent performances in the major opera houses of the world, including the Metropolitan in New York where it was introduced in 1885.

Goldmark's melody was always tinged strongly with Oriental coloring, and his orchestration brilliant. These characteristics—here appearing in an opera whose setting is the Near East—lent a marked vividness to the story itself. The barbaric March and the corybantic ballet music are perennial favorites on lighter concert programs.

The libretto departs from the Biblical account of the Queen's visit to Solomon by inserting a story about young Assad, a courtier in Solomon's retinue, who wavers between infatuation for the Queen and loyalty to his betrothed, Sulamith. When he resists the Queen's lures, she turns against him and is instrumental in bringing about his banishment. He departs cursing her. As she makes her way homeward across the desert, she encounters Assad again, and renews her effort to woo him. But his infatuation has turned to hatred; he curses her anew, and begs Heaven to bless his beloved Sulamith. He meets his death in a sandstorm, though not before Sulamith comes upon the scene to take him in her arms.

Besides the March and the Ballet Music, the famous portions of the opera include Solomon's air, "*Blick' empor zu jenen Räumen*," from Act II, and Sulamith's air, "*Doch eh' ich in des Todes Tal*," from Act III.

Recommended recordings: Ballet Music, V-7474 (Chicago Symphony—Stock); "*Blick' empor zu jenen Räumen*," V-18042 (Gorin).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Sakuntala Overture*

It was with his *Sakuntala Overture*, Op. 13, that Goldmark realized his first substantial success as a composer following its first performance in Vienna in 1865. It is colorful music, brilliantly orchestrated, and replete with delectable melodies, notably the first sung by the clarinets and 'cellos in unison.

The work is based on a famous tale by the Hindu poet Kalidasa. The water nymph Sakuntala, adopted daughter of a high priest, is seen by King Dushiante, who falls in love with her and marries her. Before leaving her temporarily, he gives her a ring; she is to join him in his city, identifying herself by the ring. A jealous, revengeful priest then deprives the King of his memory, which—together with Sakuntala's losing her ring—prevents him from recognizing her later. Driven away, she appeals to her mother for help. Eventually the ring is found by a fisherman, who takes it to the King; he now recalls his marriage and his love for Sakuntala, finds her again, and they live in happiness.

Recommended recording: V-12610 (Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler).

## SYMPHONY

*Rustic Wedding Symphony*

The *Rustic Wedding Symphony*, Op. 26, composed in 1876, is a symphony only by grace of the composer's designation. Actually it is a programmatic suite for orchestra in five movements, their titles indicating the program. The first movement is a Wedding March, and consists of a march melody followed by a series of thirteen variations on the theme. The second movement, entitled "Bridal Song," is in Goldmark's best lyric vein; a lovely melody for the oboe is set against the march theme of the first movement voiced by the basses. In the third movement, "Serenade," the oboes carry the principal theme, a slight but pleasingly tuneful subject. The fourth movement, "In the Garden," is a musical description of the dialogue of the two lovers—a tender and delicately written page of music. The symphony concludes with a "Dance," in which the principal theme is presented fugally. Melodious throughout, gracefully written with fine taste and a pleasing manner, Goldmark's *Rustic Wedding Symphony* may not rank with the great symphonies, but it has never lost its capacity to enchant its audiences.

Recommended recording: CM-385 (C.B.S. Orchestra—Barlow).

## GOULD

MORTON GOULD, b. Richmond Hill, Long Island, 1913. Worked in vaudeville, motion-picture theaters, and radio, achieving national fame as conductor and composer in the last-named field. In 1934, he composed *Choral and Fugue in Jazz* which was performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Stokowski. Since then he has composed numerous works which have been performed extensively over the air and in the symphony hall. He has also achieved note as an arranger of popular music.

IN his best works, Gould has attempted to write jazz with dignity and seriousness of purpose. "To me," he once said in an interview, "jazz and swing and jive, combined with our marvelous folk songs, are vitally important for our musical development." He has been outstandingly successful in converting jazz into a serious artistic expression. His best works include *American Symphonette* (Recommended recording: V-4456, Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler), *Foster Gallery* (Recommended recording: VM-727—Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler), Piano Concerto, *Cowboy Rhapsody*, First Symphony and—most important of all—*Spirituals*. His sphere is a limited one, but he has made that sphere his own. His music reveals personality and character; it

is living music with charm and appeal, and with native flavor and color. It has a definite place in American music.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Spirituals*

*Spirituals*, for string choir and orchestra, was first performed under the baton of the composer at the American Music Festival in 1941. In this work, Gould tried to transfer into symphonic music the emotional idiom of Negro and White Spirituals. Though Gould occasionally quotes a motive from an actual Spiritual, the melodic material is essentially of his own composition. Striving for the effect achieved by a congregation and a choir in a Negro service, he uses a string choir to carry the principal burden of the music, while the orchestra serves as accompaniment. He achieves a wide range of feeling and emotion—from simple and devout pathos to drama of great and stirring intensity. The work is in five parts: I. Proclamation; II. Sermon; III. A Little Bit of Sin; IV. Protest; V. Jubilee.

# GOUNOD

CHARLES GOUNOD, b. Paris, 1818. Studied at the Paris Conservatory with Halévy, winning the Prix de Rome in 1839. His first opera, *Sapho*, was presented at the Opéra in 1851, but it was some time before he achieved success. From 1852 to 1860 he conducted the Orphéon for which he wrote several choral works. In 1859, *Faust* brought him international fame, and in 1866 he was elected a member of the Institut. In 1870, he visited London where he remained for five years and where he founded the Gounod Choir. In the last years of his life he reverted to an early absorption in religion, and his composing activity was now devoted primarily to sacred music. He died in Paris in 1893.

## OPERA

### *Faust*

**I**N five acts, book by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré, first performed at the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris, on March 19, 1859.

It took Gounod two years to write *Faust*, which was the successor of a series of operas, all of them failures. *Faust* was not successful at its first performance, though the "Soldiers' Chorus" was praised. One critic called the opera an experiment that had failed, and not a publisher would at first risk issuing it. In time, however, an enterprising publisher named Choudens decided to issue it; and to his amazement the published opera earned more

than three million francs' profit within a few years. A revival of *Faust* was therefore demanded ten years later. When it was given again—on March 3, 1869—it met with rousing success, and has remained to the present time one of the best-loved operas in the entire repertory.

*Faust* has commonplace pages of pedestrian music, but at its best it is melodious, fresh, full of appeal. "The dreamy languor which pervades the love music of the third act," wrote Streatfeild, "the cloying sweetness of the harmonies, the melting beauty of the orchestration, all combine to produce an effect which at the time was entirely new to opera. . . . With all its faults, *Faust* remains a work of a high order of beauty. Every page tells of a striving after a lofty ideal, and though as regards actual form Gounod made no attempt to break new ground, the aim and atmosphere of *Faust*, no less than the details of the construction, contrast so strongly with the conventional Italianism of the day that it may well be regarded as the inauguration of a new era in French opera."

The libretto was drawn from the Marguerite sections of Goethe's epic poem. The aged Faust (or Doctor Faustus) signs a pact with Mephistopheles: if the latter will restore Faust's youth, and grant him a vision of Marguerite at her spinning wheel, Faust will yield his soul to Mephistopheles. Becoming young again, Faust seduces Marguerite with a casket of jewels, and then abandons her. Her brother Valentin avenges the girl's honor by fighting a duel with Faust, who kills him. When Marguerite is imprisoned for murdering her child, Faust enters the prison and urges her to flee with him; but she refuses, accepting death instead.

The most famous portions of *Faust* include the waltz from Act II; the "Flower Song" for tenor, the tenor cavatina "*Salut! demeure,*" the "Jewel Song" for soprano, all from Act III; the Soldiers' Chorus, and "Mephisto's Serenade" from Act IV; and the ballet music and Prison Scene from Act V.

Although Gounod reached his highest peak as a composer with *Faust*, he produced at least two other operas that enjoy a high position in the repertoire: *Mireille* (1864), based on the Provençal poem by Mistral, and *Roméo et Juliette* (1867), the famous operatic adaptation of the Shakespeare tragedy.

Recommended recording: VM-105 (Paris Opéra and Opéra-Comique Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra—Büsser).

# GRANADOS

ENRIQUE GRANADOS, b. Lerida, Spain, 1867. Studied the piano with Pujol and harmony with Pedrell. It was the latter who directed him towards Spanish folk music and the mission of composing in a native idiom. He combined his work as a composer with that of teacher and piano virtuoso. In 1916 he came to the United States to attend the première of his opera *Goyescas* at the Metropolitan Opera House. He died on his way back to Europe when the *Sussex* was torpedoed by a German submarine off Dieppe.

PASSIONATELY interested in Spanish folk music, Granados was one of the group of Spanish composers who wrote successfully in native idiom and familiarized the music world with the authentic music of Spain. "The musical interpretation of Spain," he once wrote, "is not to be found in tawdry boleros and habaneras, in Carmen, in anything accompanied by tambourines and castanets. The music of my nation is far more complex, more poetic, and more subtle." To make the rest of the world realize the distinction between true Spanish music and the misleading imitations composed by foreigners, Granados incorporated folk styles and idioms in his own works. "He may be said," wrote Leigh Henry, "to represent in modern Spanish music the dramatic element which finds fluid expression in the melodic flow and poetic themes of the Malagueñas, and in the rhythmic nuances and movements of the popular Spanish dances. In so treating Spanish characteristics, however, Granados was objective and concerned with tonal and rhythmic-dynamic effects, not subjective, as the folk-cult 'nationalists' are."

## OPERA

### *Goyescas*

In three acts, libretto by Fernando Periquet, first performed at the Metropolitan Opera House on January 25, 1916.

On March 11, 1911, Granados himself introduced at the Palais de la Musique Catalane what he considered to be his masterpiece for the piano, two volumes entitled *Goyescas*, inspired by paintings and tapestries by Goya and by incidents and events during Goya's era. "In *Goyescas*," he explained in an interview, "I intended to give a personal note, a mixture of bitterness and grace . . . rhythm, color, and life that are typically Spanish; and a sentiment suddenly amorous and passionate, dramatic and tragic, such as is seen in the works of Goya." *Goyescas* is one of the truly great piano works which have come from Spain. With his extraordinary knowledge of pianistic technique, his absorption of nineteenth-century piano style, and his amalgamation of this technique with native Spanish colors, styles, and mannerisms, Granados composed, in *Goyescas*, what many consider the first great Spanish work for the piano.

Subsequently, Granados was inspired by the idea of revamping the material

of his piano masterpiece, and elaborating it into an operatic score. Not until he had completed his score did he call on Enrique Periquet to write a libretto for him. Borrowing characters and figures suggested by Goya's canvases and adding some of his own Periquet fashioned a colorful libretto of early nineteenth-century Spain, and for it Granados composed some of his most eloquent music. Using native Malagueñas, and borrowing the pulse and movement of other popular Spanish dances, the work is Spanish to the core: luscious, almost Oriental, in its harmonic brilliance, and thoroughly Spanish in its sinuous melodic line and the complexity of its rhythms.

Rosario is invited by the toreador Paquita to a candlelight ball. When Don Fernando, captain of the guards, hears of this he is smitten with jealousy, for he is in love with Rosario. At the ball, Paquita challenges Fernando to a duel. Fernando is wounded mortally and dies in the arms of the woman he loves.

*Goyescas* was accepted for performance by the Paris Opéra in 1914, but World War I prevented this. Instead, it was taken up by the Metropolitan Opera in New York and introduced there in 1916. Granados himself came to America to superintend the rehearsals and attend the world première. New York gave him and his opera an enthusiastic reception that proved to be one of the most substantial triumphs of his career.

The most famous portion of the opera, the Intermezzo, was composed almost as an afterthought, Granados having written it long after the score was finished. During the rehearsal of the opera at the Metropolitan, it was suggested to him that at one point an intermezzo was called for. He wrote it rapidly, little realizing that it was destined to become the one excerpt which would make the name of *Goyescas* known throughout the world.

Recommended recording: Intermezzo, V-12429 (Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler).

## PIANO MUSIC

### *Twelve Spanish Dances*

Granados, who was a concert pianist, wrote magnificently for the piano. He succeeded to a remarkable degree in blending sound pianistic technique with native Spanish idioms, and is rightly known as the father of modern Spanish piano music. He wrote with fertility for the piano, but of his many works the most famous, and the most likely to remain famous, are his *Goyescas* in its original form (see above), and the *Twelve Spanish Dances*. In the latter, he transferred every known element of Spanish folk dances to the piano, producing an instrumental work in which Spanish folk idioms are predominant, even though the technique is foreign.

"In his way of writing for the piano he owed much to Liszt," wrote J. B. Trend. "The texture of his music is definitely nineteenth century—that is to say, German. Yet his sense of form—or, as some critics hastily conclude, the absence of it—was also new; he rambled on, making his points by repetition

(like a Spanish poet) and saying the same things in a number of delightful and decorative ways."

The best-known of the twelve dances are the No. 5 in E minor (*Andaluza*), and the No. 6 in D major (*Rond' alla Aragonesa*). Many of the dances have been orchestrated by the Catalan conductor and composer Juan Lamote de Grignon.

Recommended recordings: Spanish Dance No. 2, arranged for orchestra, V-35977 (New Light Symphony—Goossens); Spanish Dance No. 5, arranged for orchestra, V-35977 (New Light Symphony—Goossens); Spanish Dance No. 6, arranged for orchestra, V-35978 (New Light Symphony—Goossens).

## GRETCHANINOV

ALEXANDER GRETCHANINOV, b. Moscow, 1864. Studied at the Moscow Conservatory with Safonov, and at the St. Petersburg Conservatory with Rimsky-Korsakov. He was for many years professor of composition at the Moscow Institute. In 1922, he left his native land and settled in Paris. In 1939, he came to the United States.

GRETCHANINOV wrote many fine works in numerous forms—operas, symphonies, orchestral pieces, choral music, chamber works, songs. Though little of his music is heard in this country, except occasional songs, his rank among the Russian composers of our time is high by virtue of a fertile inventiveness, an inexhaustible lyric gift, and strong national flavor. He was probably greatest in his sacred music, of which he wrote a marvelous library. "He stands," wrote Sabaneyev, "as the highest exponent of Russian church composition, a field virtually unknown in [western] Europe. A perfect master of choral orchestration, if one may use this expression, knowing to perfection the properties of the human voice, Gretchaninov can extract from choral masses utterly unexpected and frequently overpowering effects. . . . In this field he is also an innovator. . . . Gretchaninov widens the scope of the effects of music, displaying broad plans and a certain grandioseness of conception, but without trespassing the limits of its style, as in the *Demyestvennaya Liturgy*."

Though occasionally a symphony, choral work, or chamber work of his is heard in our concert halls as a novelty, it is almost exclusively through his songs that Gretchaninov is known to most American audiences.

### SONGS

In his songs, Gretchaninov revealed a bewildering variety of mood and style. Every taste can find satisfaction in the library of Gretchaninov's songs. Over each of them a sensitive beauty hovers. The main characteristics of his



songs, in the words of M. D. Calvocoressi, are "refinement, easy grace, and sentiment which at its best owes little to sentimentality."

His best songs include the cycles *Poèmes dramatiques* and *Tartar Songs*, and the series of ten children's songs entitled *Snowflakes*, as well as individual songs such as *Lullaby*, *Steppes*, *With a Sharp Axe*, and *Tears*. These songs, wrote Ivan Narodny, "are subjectively descriptive and mirror the restless fatalistic temperament of the Slav. His ballads and songs . . . hide a brutal beauty, a beauty that lures."

Recommended recordings: *Berceuse*, C-17182D (Alpar); *The Captive*, V-15893 (Kipnis); *My Country*, V-1893 (Lehmann); *Over the Steppe*, V-118595 (Kipnis).

## GRIEG

EDVARD GRIEG, b. Bergen, Norway, 1843. Studied at the Leipzig Conservatory with Richter, Reinecke, and Moscheles. Early in life he became nationally conscious. Eager to bring Norwegian music to the attention of the world, he founded the Musical Union in Christiania (now Oslo), the capital of Norway. Between 1864 and 1874 he composed his most representative works. In 1874, he was honored with a government pension enabling him to retire to the country and devote himself exclusively to composition. During the last thirty years of his life he was accorded many honors and accepted as the leading figure in Norway. He died in Bergen in 1907.

EDVARD GRIEG has earned the sobriquet of "Chopin of the North"—which implies not that he was Chopin's imitator, but that he achieved the Norwegian equivalent of the tender melodic line, the sensitive harmonizations, and the exquisite perfection of detail that characterized Chopin's music. Because of his love of his country, as well as the influence exerted upon him by such flaming nationalists as Nordraak and Ole Bull, Grieg not only developed a profound admiration of Norwegian folk music but moulded his compositional technique on the style and idioms of Norwegian folk music; in most of his finest works we detect a strong national consciousness. Yet, as Lawrence Gilman wrote, Grieg "wears no man's mantle, he borrows no man's speech." He had a lyric vein of his own, perfectly proportioned, and exquisitely fashioned. His music had a gentleness and a pastoral quality unique in Romantic music. His music, in the description of Daniel Gregory Mason, is "intimate, suggestive, intangible."

## CONCERTO

### *Concerto in A minor*

In March of 1868 a daughter was born to the Griegs, and the Piano Concerto, Op. 16, composed that summer is undoubtedly an expression of his

joy in parenthood. Though not striking for originality (it betrays the influence of Liszt, Chopin, and Schumann), it is nevertheless music of charm, occasionally marked by an intensity not often encountered in Grieg's works.

The atmosphere of the A minor Concerto is idyllic, often touched with mellow poetry. It opens buoyantly with a spirited theme in the orchestra which is then repeated by the solo piano. A second subject is equally emotional and light-hearted. The middle movement, *Adagio*, is one of Grieg's most soulful and heartfelt songs. "Nothing," wrote Henry T. Finck, "could be more lovely than the orchestral introduction to the slow movement . . . a prelude illustrating Grieg's gift of creating an emotional atmosphere with the simplest means." In the *Finale*, Norwegian folk influences are asserted both in the harmonic structure and in the rhythms. It is joyous music with an almost peasant lustiness.

In April 1870, when Grieg was spending some time in Rome, he showed the manuscript of the concerto to Liszt who played it through (at sight!), praised it enthusiastically, and suggested certain revisions in the orchestration—changes which Grieg adopted but later discarded. "Carry on, my friend," Liszt told Grieg. "You have real talent. Don't ever let them frighten you."

The concerto was introduced at Christiania in 1870. The soloist was Edmund Neupert, to whom the concerto was dedicated.

Recommended recording: CM-313 (Giesecking; Berlin State Opera Orchestra—Rosbaud).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Holberg Suite*

The *Holberg Suite*, Op. 40, for string orchestra was the nationalist Grieg's musical tribute to the cultural past of his country. Ludvig Holberg, born in Bergen, Norway, in 1684, was one of Scandinavia's great artistic figures, and is considered the founder of Danish literature. For Bergen's celebration of the 200th anniversary of his birth, Grieg was asked to compose a cantata for outdoor performance. Though he fulfilled the assignment, the composition itself was not much to his liking; he even considered destroying the manuscript. Then—possibly to placate his artistic conscience—he wrote another work which he felt was more in keeping with the times of Holberg: a piano suite made up of dances such as were in vogue in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The movements of the suite *Aus Holbergs Zeit* comprise *Prelude*, *Sarabande*, *Gavotte*, *Musette*, *Air*, and *Rigaudon*. Though all these dance forms are old, Grieg invested them with the modern spirit. In them a great Scandinavian artist of the late nineteenth century was addressing another great Scandinavian of the early eighteenth, and speaking to him in his own identifiable speech. Originally composed for the piano (1884), and to

this day one of Grieg's better-known piano works, it was later transcribed by the composer for string orchestra.

Recommended recording: VM-792 (London String Orchestra—Goehr).

### *Peer Gynt Suites*

As a young man of twenty-two, Grieg first met Ibsen, but the great dramatist accorded the musician little more than polite thanks for his words of high admiration. Ten years later, Grieg was a famous musician. This time, Ibsen approached him by letter with a request that he compose incidental music to a new Ibsen play, *Peer Gynt*. He gave Grieg specific directions as to where in the play music should be interpolated, and even as to what kind of music was called for.

Many years later, Grieg's wife described how Grieg wrote this masterpiece. "For several days he went about in a nervous, restless state, in great doubt and anxiety as to the heavy task. The more he saturated his mind with the powerful poem the more clearly he saw that he was the right man for a work of such wild witchery and so permeated with the Norwegian spirit. In the suburb of Sandviken, outside Bergen, he found a pavilion, with windows on every side, high up on a hill . . . with a magnificent view of the sea on one side and the mountains on the other. *Solveig's Song* was the first number to see the light. Then *Ase's Death*. I shall never forget the bright summer evening on the mountains, as we sang and played together *Solveig's Song*. For the first time, Grieg himself smiled, well-pleased with the song, and called it a 'public lamp.' Grieg himself considered *Ase's Death* and *Solveig's Song* to be his best work."

When Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* was first performed—at Christiania on February 24, 1876—the twenty-two musical numbers so successfully bore out the spirit and atmosphere of the play that at least a part of its triumph was due to the apt incidental music.

Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* was a headstrong, impetuous, lustful youth symbolizing moral degeneration. He abducts the beautiful Solveig and abandons her. He goes roaming over the world; has love affairs with Ingrid and with the Troll King's daughter in the Hall of the Mountain King. After a brief visit to his home to attend the deathbed of his mother, Åse, he is off on further adventures—this time with Anitra. Eventually, after many years, he returns home, old and wasted, to die in the arms of the ever-faithful Solveig.

From the incidental pieces composed for the play, Grieg developed two orchestral suites. The first, now widely famous, spread Grieg's name throughout the world of music. It includes four movements: I. Morning—the sun rises and *Peer Gynt* contemplates his world; II. *Åse's Death*, a melancholy dirge with a touch of ancient modes in its harmonies; III: *Anitra's Dance*, gay and seductive, in mazurka time; IV. In the Hall of the Mountain King, a vivid depiction of cavorting gnomes, goblins, and elves in their eerie cavern.

The second suite, less often played than the first, includes Solveig's Song, one of Grieg's most felicitous lyric creations. The three preceding movements are: I. Ingrid's Lament; II. Arabian Dance; III. The Return of Peer Gynt.

It is curious that this music—appearing so spontaneous and fresh, and as if written with ease—was composed by Grieg with very little pleasure. He felt himself incapable of producing music worthy of Ibsen's play, and the assignment weighed heavily on him. ("It is an intractable subject," he complained to a friend.) He grew to dislike some of the parts ("As for the piece I wrote for The Hall of the Mountain King, I can tolerate it no longer!"). Yet of all his works, it was the first *Peer Gynt* Suite that made him famous.

Recommended recordings: Suite No. 1, VM-404 (London Philharmonic—Goossens); Suite No. 2, V-9327-8 (New Light Symphony—Goossens).

### *Two Elegiac Melodies*

Grieg adapted two of his famous songs for string orchestra, Op. 34: *The Wounded Heart* and *The Last Spring* (lyrics by A. O. Vinje)—melancholy melodies with somber harmonic colors. The first of the two, Allegretto espressivo, voices a quiet and tender sorrow; and the second, Andante, is a mellow, melancholy reverie.

Recommended recording: C-11698D (Minneapolis Symphony—Mitropoulos).

## PIANO MUSIC

Grieg wrote particularly well for the piano, filling the shorter forms with a wide variety of moods and feelings, and frequently with nationalistic color. "Grieg's piano music," wrote Albert E. Wier, "has enjoyed enormous popularity both on account of its distinctly Norwegian characteristics and by its intrinsic merit. Grieg did not fall into the error of confronting the pianist with enormous technical details. . . . He wrote in a thoroughly national style, but contrived to give his works a universal appeal. . . . Possibly no other composer was as successful with the smaller forms as Grieg." (For comment on the *Holberg Suite* see above: Orchestral Music).

### *Ballade in G minor*

Grieg's *Ballade in G minor*, Op. 24, consists of a set of variations on a Norwegian theme of plaintive character. The work is not a consistent masterpiece, and some of the variations are rather labored. But at its best (the first and the ninth variations particularly) it is fine Grieg, and it contains enough poetic charm to give it a permanent place in the piano repertory.

Recommended recording: C-LX9-10 (Godowsky).

### *Lyric Pieces*

Grieg's magnum opus for the piano is the *Lyric Pieces* comprising sixty-six pieces in ten volumes (Opp. 12, 38, 43, 47, 54, 62, 65, 68, 71). The first volume appeared in 1867, the last in 1901. There is here, as Yvonne Rosketh

wrote, the good and the mediocre, "confidences that are sincere and personal, lyric interpretations of the popular life, insignificant trifles, Schumann *pastiches*, some slight, some charming. However, not one of these pieces is negligible: the least original of them is marked by excellent harmonic or rhythmic workmanship which gives it life. . . . One of the best groups of this ensemble is that which is inspired directly by Norwegian folklore. . . . At the side of this series one can place those pieces in which the artist gave his impressions of the Norwegian people or of Norwegian Nature, his gratitude for so much beauty, his happiness in seeing it again after a prolonged absence, his nostalgia for it during his absence. . . . All in all, the *Lyric Pieces* reflect the two facets of Grieg's personality, the elegiac and the joyous. . . . The best of these pieces is usually the briefest. . . . [Grieg] is never so completely himself as when he can avoid an elaborate structure, forget about developing his ideas, and scatter his fresh thoughts in several bars of music. The form, or rather the absence of form, which the title 'Lyric Piece' permitted him suited him best of all."

The best-known of the Lyric Pieces include: "*Papillons*," Op. 43, No. 1; "Lonely Wanderer," Op. 43, No. 2; "To Spring," Op. 43, No. 6; "*Melodie*," Op. 47, No. 3; "Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen," Op. 65, No. 6; "Cradle Song," Op. 68, No. 5; and "Puck," Op. 71, No. 3.

Recommended recordings: "*Papillons*," V-18153 (Sanromá); "Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen," C-DF2147 (Bor); "Cradle Song," C-69090D (Giesecking); "Puck," arranged for violin and piano by Achron, V-6848 (Heifetz).

## SONATAS

### *Violin Sonata in G major*

In 1864, Grieg was secretly engaged to his cousin Nina Hagerup, a talented singer. For the time, marriage was out of the question because of his financial insecurity; but when it was eventually consummated in 1867, it marked the beginning of a long and idyllic relationship. Nina Grieg inspired her husband's finest music, and one of the first masterpieces in which her influence can be traced is the Violin Sonata, Op. 13, composed by Grieg one month after his marriage.

This is a work, as Yvonne Rosketh remarks, in which "his musical thought is most constantly maintained on an elevated level. The opening recitative (*Lento doloroso*) . . . announces in advance the principal subject of the first movement, which is full of happy thematic ideas. From a pathetic accent at the beginning, the introduction permits itself to brighten with memories of his native land; an energetic and rhythmic theme, full of joy and vigor, pronounced first by the piano. . . . The *Allegretto tranquillo* which succeeds this movement is of a marvelous purity of writing. The melodic curve is a model of perfection. . . . The third movement . . . is full of spirit and charm."

Recommended recording: VM-735 (Heifetz).

*Violin Sonata in C minor*

Grieg's third Violin Sonata, Op. 45, is one of his unquestioned masterpieces. As Ernest Closson wrote: "From beginning to end it is a marvel of inspiration, intellect, independence. The art of the people is here, once more, placed under tribute, but with harmonies of a boldness and a delicacy that are admirable. Finally there is what contributes not a little to the grandeur . . . a simplicity, an austerity, a sort of classicism within modernity in the final movement. Had Grieg composed nothing but this sonata it would suffice to hand him down to posterity."

The sonata is in three movements: I. Allegro molto ed Appassionata; Presto; II. Allegretto espressivo alla Romanza; Allegro molto; III. Finale: Allegro animato; Cantabile; Prestissimo.

Recommended recording: VM-45 (Kreisler; Rachmaninoff).

## SONGS

Grieg's unquestioned talent for writing suave and mobile melodies inevitably made him a notable song composer. "There is in the best of them," wrote Richard Aldrich, "spontaneous melody, a sadness and tenderness, a harmonic subtlety, that are altogether individual."

Much of the popularity of Grieg's songs, according to W. E. Whitehouse, is due to "the piquant and expressive melodic idioms which Grieg caught from folk songs of his country, and much, too, to the actual novelty and charm of his harmonies and harmonic contrasts which were entirely his own. . . . In his best moments he penetrates with rare insight into the very heart of a poem, and with a few bold and vivid strokes sets before us a glowing picture, and stamps it indelibly with his own sign and seal on our hearts and minds. It is impossible not to recognize genius in the dramatic intensity of *Ein Schwan* . . . in the tragic solemnity of *Auf der Bahre einer jungen Frau*, in the quiet reflective mood of *Auf der Reise zur Heimath*, in the inimitable charm and delicacy of *Im Kahne*, or in the tenderness of *Margaretens Wiegenlied* and *Die alte Mutter*. . . . Such songs as these . . . would, of themselves, be enough to show that among the minor song composers Grieg had more of the vital qualities which arrest and move than any, and that he holds in virtue of them . . . a place which is his own."

Other famous Grieg songs characteristic of his lyric genius include: *Ich liebe Dich*, which he wrote to his wife, *Ein Traum*, and *Zur Johannisnacht*.

Recommended recordings: *Ein Traum*, V-1804 (Flagstad); *Ich liebe Dich*, V-1882 (Melchoir); *Im Kahne*, V-1813 (Flagstad); *Ein Schwan*, V-1814 (Flagstad); *Eros, Til Norge*, VM-851 (Melchoir).

# GRIFFES

CHARLES TOMLINSON GRIFFES, b. Elmira, New York, 1884. Completed his piano studies in Berlin, at the same time becoming Humperdinck's pupil in theory. Upon his return to America, he taught music at the Hackley School in Tarrytown, New York, a post he held until his death. He composed most of his works in obscurity, recognition coming to him only in the last months of his life. He died prematurely in 1920, at the age of thirty-six, in New York.

**T**HOUGH Griffes's works are few in number, they are of sufficient importance to place him in the front rank of American composers. He was a sensitive poet with an extraordinary descriptive gift and an exquisite feeling for colors and nuances. His frequent use of ancient modes and Oriental scales gives his music an other-worldly character.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *The Pleasure Dome of Kubla Khan*

The inspiration for Griffes's greatest work is, of course, the famous poem by Coleridge—particularly the lines that tell of the "stately pleasure dome," and the "sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice, the miracle of strange device." "I have given my imagination free rein in the description of this strange place as well as of purely imaginary revelry which might take place there," explained Griffes. "The vague, foggy beginning suggests the sacred river, running 'through caverns measureless to man down to a sunless sea.' Then gradually rise the outlines of the palace 'with walls and towers girdled round.' The gardens with fountains and 'sunny spots of greenery' are next suggested. From inside come sounds of dancing and revelry which increase to a wild climax, and then suddenly break off. There is a return to the original mood suggesting the sacred river and the 'caves of ice.' "

This was destined to be Griffes's final work. When in 1920 it was accepted for performance by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, it seemed that at last the unknown music-teacher of Tarrytown was about to enjoy the sunlight of success. But Griffes was too poor to engage a copyist to write out the orchestra parts, and he had to do the work himself, largely at night after long hours of teaching. Never very strong, he grew so exhausted by this task that he succumbed to pneumonia. The first performance of *The Pleasure Dome of Kubla Khan* was so successful that overnight Griffes became known and respected. On his sickbed he received not only the tidings of his success but commissions for future works from leading musical organizations. But the recognition came too late. He never recovered.

Recommended recording: V-7959 (Minneapolis Symphony—Ormandy).

*The White Peacock*

*The White Peacock* was originally composed for the piano as one of the movements of the *Four Roman Sketches*, Op. 7. Subsequently, Griffes orchestrated it, and it has since become one of his best-known orchestral works. It was inspired by a poem of William Sharp, and to fully appreciate the mood and background of the music it is only necessary to read the following lines:

"Here where the sunlight,  
Floodeth the garden  
. . . Where the heat lies,  
Pale and blue in the hollows,  
Here where the dream flowers.

. . . . .  
Pale, pale as the breath of blue smoke in far woodlands,  
Here, as the breath, as the soul of his beauty,  
Moves the White Peacock."

Recommended recording: C-17140 (C.B.S. Symphony—Barlow).

## PIANO MUSIC

*Four Roman Sketches*

This suite is Griffes's most famous work for the piano (Op. 7), composed in 1915-16. In his analysis, John Tasker Howard wrote: "First comes *The White Peacock*, who makes his bow in a languorous chromatic passage. *Night-fall* brings the strange sounds of the early evening, an almost oppressive quiet. *The Fountain of Acqua Paola* shows the rise and the fall of the water, the shimmering lights of the foam. Its kinship with the *Jeux d'eau* of Ravel shows the tremendous influence the French composer had on the work of Griffes's second period. The last piece of the set, *Clouds*, starts with a lofty chordal passage, suggesting the high and massive cloud banks."

There is here, wrote Norman Peterkin, "a fastidiousness that almost borders on precosity . . . but it is always redeemed from weakness by the sharp and invigorating outline of the melodic phrase. There is a sweep and power in the work that effaces the little unnecessary harmonic extravagance to be found here and there. The analogies and sympathies with the modern Frenchmen are still here, but Griffes's period of experimentation is gone and the utterance is his own."

Recommended recording: *The White Peacock*, V-7384 (Samaroff).



# GROFÉ

FERDE GROFÉ, b. New York, 1892. After playing the viola in the Los Angeles Symphony Orchestra he turned to jazz, first directing a band of his own, then joining Paul Whiteman's band as pianist and arranger. He became one of the best arrangers in Tin Pan Alley. In 1924, Grofé left Whiteman to become a free-lance arranger. He then began composing larger works in the jazz idiom, achieving great success in this field.

As arranger for Paul Whiteman, Ferde Grofé proved his knowledge of the Orchestra and his natural talent in writing for it. In his own compositions, his gift for instrumentation is still of first interest. But with it, Grofé combines an aptitude for writing jazz in larger forms, in which jazz style and structure become uniquely adapted for artistic expression. If his scope is limited, he is nevertheless skilful in what he attempts to do. Technical mastery combines with freshness of idiom and vigor to make his works appealing to large audiences.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Grand Canyon Suite*

Grofé's most successful work, and the happiest realization of his jazz style in larger forms, was introduced by Paul Whiteman and his orchestra on November 22, 1931. In this work, Grofé essays to describe in tones the varied and changing beauties of the Grand Canyon. Though jazz techniques are employed, this is essentially not jazz music but descriptive music of graphic vividness in an obviously American vein. The work is in five sections, and the subtitles give us the clue to Grofé's musical intentions: I. Sunrise; II. The Painted Desert; III. On the Trail; IV. Sunset; V. Cloudburst.

In the first movement, a vivid description of the birth of the day is given: a muted trumpet announces the principal theme, suggestive of the sunrise; the movement develops as the full orchestra announces daybreak. The second movement is a beautiful musical picture in which the awe and mystery of the Painted Desert are described. The third movement is the most famous of the five: a cowboy tune is set against a theme depicting the jogging of a donkey. In the fourth movement we hear the distant calls of the animals in the Canyon; while the fifth movement reproduces musically the approach, the outbreak, and then the dissipation of a storm in the Canyon.

Recommended recording: VM-1038 (NBC Symphony—Toscanini).

# GRUENBERG

LOUIS GRUENBERG, b. near Brest-Litovsk in the Ukraine, 1883; brought to America, 1885. Studied music with Adele Margulies, and in Europe with Busoni. After touring as a concert pianist, he turned to his career as a composer in 1912 when his symphonic poem *Hill of Dreams* won a \$10,000 award. After 1919, he began a series of jazz works including *Daniel Jazz* and *Jazz Suite*. He has recently composed several scores for Hollywood including *The Commandos Strike at Dawn*.

THOUGH Gruenberg's works are few and far between, he is one of the most original and talented of American composers. Along with his command of technique he manifests vitality and freshness. He has used the jazz technique with extraordinary skill and eloquence, making it the vehicle of tenderness, passion, drama, and wit. His outstanding work is the opera *The Emperor Jones*, one of the most important of native American operas.

## OPERA

### *The Emperor Jones*

In two acts, a prologue, and an interlude, book by the composer, introduced at the Metropolitan Opera House on January 7, 1933.

For two years, Gruenberg discussed with Eugene O'Neill in Paris the possibility of making an opera of O'Neill's famous play, *The Emperor Jones*. The two would meet at midnight and talk for hours, and eventually the playwright was convinced that Gruenberg's idea was practicable and authorized him to change the text as needed for operatic adaptation. Gruenberg then took a house in Old Orchard, Maine, where he worked for fourteen months on his opera.

Gruenberg's libretto follows the original play rather closely. Brutus Jones, a former Pullman porter, becomes emperor on a Caribbean Island. His rule being overthrown, he flees to the forest, armed with a revolver which has six bullets, one of them made of silver, to be used for suicide if escape is impossible. In the forest, to the sound of voodoo drums, he sees phantoms of men he has killed. At these phantoms he fires five of his bullets. When he comes face to face with the phantom of the Crocodile God, he fires his sixth—the silver bullet. Throughout that night, his horror grows. And the following morning he is captured.

The first performance of *The Emperor Jones* was successful. Olin Downes reviewed it as follows: "For an American opera to appear which not only stands on its own feet, but represents a treatment of the form that could only come from a new country and a young people fully alive to the present day, is the thing which makes the success of Gruenberg's opera so gratifying and so important to the future."

In a sound and astute musical analysis of the score, Marion Bauer wrote: "The movement of the music timed to the dramatic action was expertly done.

The mood of Jones, first in his braggadocio, then in his panic as it increases, is mirrored in the music. Gruenberg has achieved a new and original effect in the opera in treating the orchestra as background to the exciting and moving drama. Although incidental, the music played apart from the opera would probably be one of the most extraordinary scores of modern times. The composer has lost all sense of personality in the primitive force of the music. Short-breathed phrases follow each other in rapid succession. The deeper-toned instruments are used to create a somber, sinister web over which the highest registers of the wood winds and violins flare up shriekingly. Rhythmically, Gruenberg has made some remarkable effects."

The high musical moment of the opera is the Spiritual, "Standin' in the Need of Prayer," sung by Brutus Jones towards the close of the opera.

Recommended recording: "Standin' in the Need of Prayer," V-7959 (Tibbett).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *The Enchanted Isle*

Originally an early work of Gruenberg's, *The Enchanted Isle* was revived in 1929 and given its first performance at the Worcester Festival on October 3, 1929. The composer has thus explained the origin and content of this music: "*The Enchanted Isle* was a second of four tone poems projected during the First World War in an attempt to make a world somewhat pleasanter than the one existing then. Two of these were never finished. . . . In rummaging through a bale of manuscripts (in 1929) which I had not seen for eight years, I found the score of *The Enchanted Isle*, whose very existence I had completely forgotten. As I idly turned its pages, a theme here, a passage there, gradually brought back to me the wistful romantic days of my youth. . . . I grew sentimental, and determined to recapture a whiff of these enchanted isles of my memory, gradually making a complete new score, retaining the emotions—most of the melodies and the original work—but making use of my newly acquired freedom, knowledge of orchestration, harmony, and construction. And that sums up what *The Enchanted Isle* represents in my artistic career—a bridge between the old and the new."

# HALÉVY

JACQUES HALÉVY, b. Paris, 1799. Studied at the Paris Conservatory, winning the Prix de Rome in 1819. In 1827 he was appointed professor of harmony at the Conservatory. He composed many operas and comic operas before achieving his first substantial success—with his masterpiece,—*La Juive*, 1834. Though he composed many operas after *La Juive*, in none did he achieve an equal measure of success. He died in Nice in 1862.

THOUGH Halévy composed some charming comic operas which inspired the praise of Wagner, he is today remembered exclusively for *La Juive*, a work rather conventional in its form following the model set by Meyerbeer, but nevertheless filled with warmth of feeling and lyrical beauty.

## OPERA

### *La Juive*

In five acts, book by Eugène Scribe, first performed at the Paris Opéra on February 23, 1835.

It was with *La Juive* that Halévy achieved the highest peak of his creative power. With a score which, as Streatfeild pointed out, had "dignity and sobriety," Halévy proved that he owned a dramatic instinct, a rich feeling for melody, and an unusual capacity to translate human emotions into moving music. *La Juive* took Paris by storm, and it duplicated this success in other leading European opera houses.

Eleazar, a rich Jew of Constance, has a daughter Rachel who is loved by Prince Leopold. Leopold, to further his suit with Rachel, disguises himself as a Jewish painter, Samuel. Rachel, however, uncovers not only Leopold's true identity but also the fact that he has a wife. Because she publicly accuses him of his deception, Leopold is excommunicated by the Cardinal and is imprisoned, together with Eleazar and Rachel. Leopold's wife pleads with Rachel to withdraw her accusation. Rachel does so, and Leopold is set free. Rachel and Eleazar, however, are condemned to die for intriguing against a Christian. As they are about to be thrown into boiling oil, Eleazar confesses that Rachel is not really his daughter but that of the Cardinal and that he had saved her as a child from a burning palace.

The best-known passages of the opera are the Passover Scene from Act II, and the famous tenor aria, "*Rachel, quand du Seigneur*," from Act IV.

Recommended recordings: Passover scene, V-18401 (Pearce: Sarnoff; chorus).

# HANDEL

GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL, b. Halle, Saxony, 1685. Studied with Zachau, following which he was given post of organist in his native city. In 1703, he settled in Hamburg, becoming a member of the Opera orchestra; it was in Hamburg that his first opera was composed and performed. In 1706, Handel left Hamburg, traveling through Europe for the next three years. In 1710 he became Kapellmeister at Hanover. In 1711 he visited England, revisiting it again in 1712 and this time remaining there permanently. He became one of the leading musical figures in England, and his influence on English music was profound. It was in England that he turned from the writing of opera to that of the oratorio. He died in London in 1759 and was buried in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

IT cannot be said of Handel, as it can of Bach, that he was a genius in all musical forms. In writing instrumental works, particularly for solo instruments, he usually composed routine music, sometimes agreeably entertaining, but rarely striking at emotional depths or striving for majestic utterances. He was the supreme genius in one field alone—that of the oratorio; concerning his achievements here much more is said below.

He was a contemporary of Bach, but there is a striking difference of style between the two composers. Parry points out the distinguishing traits of each, and in doing so highlights the distinguishing traits of Handel's style. "Where Handel aimed at beauty of melodic form, Bach strove for characteristic expression. Where Handel used orderly progressions of simple harmony, Bach aimed at contriving elaborate interweavings of subtly disposed parts to give the effect of the subtlest shade of human feeling. Where Handel used the most realistic means to convey the hopping of frogs, or the rattling of hailstones. . . . Bach attempted to express the inner feelings of human creatures under the impress of any exciting causes. . . . Nowhere is the difference of their attitude better illustrated than in their use of the recitative. Handel, accepting the conventions of the Italian art without hesitation, ruined an enormous number of his works by the emptiest, baldest and most mechanical formulas; while Bach, dissatisfied with anything which had not significance, endeavored by the contours and intervals of his solo part, by the progressions and harmonies of his accompaniments, and by every means that was available to intensify from moment to moment the expression of the words. Bach's feeling for melody was not so happy as Handel's. . . . In instrumentation both of these giants among composers were equally backward, though their aims and methods, and the rest they achieved were very different. . . . Handel did as little as it is possible for a great master to do in adding to the resources of the instrumental side of music."

## CONCERTOS

### Concertos for Orchestra

It is generally believed that when Handel visited Rome in 1708 he there heard Corelli's concerti grossi for the first time. How this music appealed to

him is shown by his own composition of concerti grossi two years later. The orchestral form first integrated by the Italian master was brought to a high stage of artistic development by Handel.

Like the Corelli concerto grosso, that of Handel contrasts solo instruments (usually two solo violins and a solo 'cello) with the entire orchestra. The Handel concerto grosso usually follows this pattern: It opens with a slow movement, frequently of a stately character. There then follow an Allegro and an Adagio, in which the solo instruments are permitted to embellish upon the principal themes. After a fugal Allegro there comes a finale. The Concerto No. 3 varies from this formula by substituting a Polonaise Andante for the Adagio and omitting the fugato. The Concerto No. 7 ends in a horn-pipe.

Handel published six concertos in Op. 3, and six in Op. 6. He wrote them easily; some went as rapidly as one a day. Yet they are masterpieces, gems among the concerti grossi of all time. For breadth in form, variety of material, nobility of thought, occasional vivacity and lightness, and richness of melodic ideas, there is nothing in concerto grosso literature to compare with Handel's works.

The most famous, and most frequently performed, are the No. 5 in D major, No. 6 in G minor, and No. 12 in B minor.

Recommended recordings: Concerto No. 5, CM-X142 (London Philharmonic—Weingartner); Concerto No. 6, CM-X164 (London Symphony—Weingartner).

### Concertos for Organ

Handel composed three volumes of organ concertos. Two of these volumes were published in his own time. The Handel organ concerto was an outgrowth of his organ improvisations with which between the acts he entertained audiences attending performances of his oratorios. Frequently, he introduced within his concerto grosso material from his oratorios: In the third concerto (of the third volume) we find a minuet from *Esther*; while the *Cuckoo and the Nightingale* concerto has an affinity with *Solomon*.

These concertos for organ are in either three or four movements. When the three-movement form is used, we have two fast movements separated by a slow one; in the four-movement concertos, each fast movement is followed by a slow one. "Broad masses of light and shade," wrote A. Eaglefield-Hull, "strong and sharp contrasts, are the striking traits of this music, whose chief aim is to make a monumental effect on a huge concourse of people."

The organ concertos are frequently played on the harpsichord; indeed, the Op. 4 set is subtitled "for organ or harpsichord." This second volume (Op. 4) consists for the most part of arrangements of the orchestral concerti grossi.

Recommended recordings: B-flat major, Op. 4, No. 2, V-15751 (Biggs); D minor, Op. 7, No. 4, V-587 (Biggs); G minor, Op. 7, No. 5, V-2099-10 (Biggs); *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale*, VM-733 (Biggs).

## OPERA

Handel's operas are not discussed individually, below, because none of them are heard any longer on the operatic stage. But they contain so much wonderful music that it is impossible to ignore them. Handel composed his first opera during his stay in Hamburg (*Almira*, 1705), where he came into contact with such geniuses of early German opera as Reinhard Keiser and Mattheson. *Almira* was successful and ran for twenty performances, encouraging Handel to compose three more operas: *Nero*, *Dafne*, and *Florinda*. In 1706 he left Hamburg, traveling at this time to Italy. In Florence, he wrote his first "Italian" opera, *Rodrigo*, which was outstandingly successful. In 1710 he visited England. There, on special commission, he composed *Rinaldo* in two weeks. The opera took London by storm after its first performance on February 24, 1711, and marked the beginning of a fertile period of operatic writing for England. By 1740, however, Handel had definitely abandoned the writing of operas for another musical form which he found much more grateful to his gifts—that of the oratorio.

Despite the fine moments achieved in his operas, Handel was not at his greatest in the theater. His operas have dramatic restrictions; they are, on the whole, stilted and artificial. He was, as C. F. Abdy Williams wrote, "not a reformer like Gluck and Wagner. He took the opera as he found it and simply embellished it by means of his great genius. He was content to work on the forms that he found established. . . . His operas have disappeared from the stage (and although attempts have been made to revive some of the best of them, especially in Germany, it cannot be pretended that they are ever likely to attract the public again, however interesting they might be to connoisseurs). Handel, in his operas, was essentially a man of his time. . . . He simply took the forms he found ready-made and adorned them with all the beauty and solidity he was capable of producing, which far surpassed the operatic efforts of his contemporaries. . . . The orchestration of Handel's operas would probably seem monotonous to an audience accustomed to the brilliancy of modern instrumentation. . . . The subject-matter of the operas is perhaps another bar to their acceptance. . . . A third obstacle is that the vocal parts were written to suit the powers of special singers and were invariably altered when it was necessary that they should be sung by others. It is scarcely possible that singers could be found to execute the more difficult songs nowadays, to say nothing of the fact that artificial male sopranos are an extinct species."

Certain magnificent pages in these operas are often heard. The most famous single piece by Handel actually comes from one of his operas: the so-called "Largo" which is the aria "*Ombra mai fu*," sung at the opening of the opera *Serse* (*Xerxes*), first performed in London in 1738.

From the opera *Alcina* two different suites of orchestral music have been collected. The first of these includes the overture and the ballet movements,

while the second has incorporated the Dream Music (Act II), the ballet music (Act I), and the Entrance and Tamburino (Act III). Sir Thomas Beecham has also collated into an orchestral suite the best orchestral numbers from the opera *Il Pastor Fido* (*The Faithful Shepherd*.)

Other operas yield wondrous arias, among them *Atalanta* (1736), "*Care Selve*"; *Floridante* (1731), "*Alma mia*"; *Rinaldo* (1711), "*Lascia ch' io pianga*."

Recommended recordings: *Alcina*, overture and ballet music, V-1435-6 (New York Philharmonic—Mengelberg); *Alcina*, Dream Music, Ballet Music, and Entrance and Tamburino, CM-X164 (Paris Conservatory Orchestra—Weingartner); *Atalanta*, "*Care selve*," V-7746 (Bampton); *Floridante*, "*Alma mia*," V-2151 (Pons); *Il Pastor Fido*, suite arranged by Beecham, CM-458 (London Philharmonic—Beecham); *Rinaldo*, "*Lascia ch' io pianga*," V-16778 (Swarthout); *Serse*, "*Ombra mai fu*," V-6753 (Schipa).

## ORATORIOS

It is in the oratorio that Handel's genius appears in all its majesty and richness.

The oratorio was born in Italy towards the close of the sixteenth century. In Rome, St. Filippo Neri, founder of the Congregation of the Oratorians (so named because they met in the oratory of Santa Maria-in-Vallicella), organized musical settings of the Bible. First known as "*Laudi Spirituali*," these settings were later renamed "oratorios," after the place in which they were performed. The first "oratorio" was *The Good Samaritan*—though it was hardly an oratorio in the modern connotation. The father of the real oratorio form was Emilio del Cavalieri, whose *La Rappresentazione dell' anima e del corpo* was the ancestor of Handel's oratorios. With Carissimi, Stradella, Alessandro Scarlatti, and Heinrich Schütz, the oratorio achieved development and integration as a musical form; but it was Handel who was its supreme genius.

Here he found the mould most happily fitted to his natural gifts, and into it he poured his greatest inspiration. The opera composer who so frequently was constricted by the demands of the theater found the oratorio much more gratifying to his pronounced dramatic instincts. The oratorio (stripped of scenery, costuming, and acting) had to depend exclusively on its music for dramatic values. Unhampered by outside influences and forces, Handel made his music an inexhaustible fund of dramatic invention, and supplied it with an endless flow of wonderful melody, with varied harmonic idioms, with remarkable contrapuntal writing. To the oratorio form he brought new vistas of expression; more—he carried it to a stage of technical and structural development beyond which it could hardly go much farther. What had preceded him sounded somewhat old-fashioned in contrast; what followed him appeared almost like imitation.

Certainly in no other branch of musical composition was he more inspired, more ingenious in his use of musical materials, more at ease in his expression.



more varied in the shades of his language. "Instead of the stereotyped harmonic structure of the dominant-tonic; subdominant-tonic which stamps so much of his work," wrote César Saerchinger, "we have rich chromatic progressions and colorful modulations; the clear-cut note-for-note harmony is varied by a setting of polyphonic web which eloquently betrays Handel's early fugal training, a polyphony as diverse almost as that of the *a cappella* masters of the past, but resting firmly on a pure harmonic foundation, euphonious, sonorous, guided by solid laws of progression, but unrestrained in its freedom of movement."

It was as the result of a rather dramatic conflict with the British clergy that Handel came to write his first oratorio. In 1732 he had decided to revive an early masque, *Haman and Mordecai*. When his intention became known, an ecclesiastical storm broke, in which the Church denounced his intention of putting a Biblical subject on the profane stage. The Bishop of London actually forbade the performance. This prohibition led Handel to rewrite the text of his masque and to perform it without costume, scenery, or action—on May 2, 1732—calling it now an oratorio rather than a masque. Its tremendous success inspired him once and for all to abandon opera and to begin writing oratorios.

With *Saul* (1738) and *Israel in Egypt* (1739) Handel produced his first masterpieces in the oratorio form. *Messiah*, coming in 1741, was followed by a series of oratorios which, as Arnold Schering points out, made the mid-eighteenth century the greatest period in oratorio history: including *Samson* (1741), *Judas Maccabaeus* (1747), *Solomon* (1748), and *Joshua* (1751).

### *Israel in Egypt*

Romain Rolland calls this masterpiece "the most gigantic effort ever made in oratorio." Four days after completing *Saul*, Handel began writing *Israel in Egypt*, his text drawn from Exodus. *Israel*, when first performed on April 4, 1739, was an outright failure. In an effort to placate a hostile public, Handel revised the work for the third performance, introducing facile Italian arias more to the current taste. But even this concession to his audiences did not work, and the oratorio was withdrawn after this third performance.

*Israel in Egypt* has no overture, but begins at once with a tenor recitative announcing: "Now there arose a new King in Egypt which knew not Joseph." There follows a chorus of magnificent feeling and power, in which the Jews lament the cruelties of bondage—a chorus which at once poises the masterpiece on a high level of inspiration. There follows a description of the plagues, which is remarkable for Handel's vivid pictorial writing. As Newman Flower remarks: "Handel produced some of the greatest pictures of natural happenings. . . . In the double chorus, 'And there came all manner of flies and lice in all their quarters,' there is to be found, clear and unmistakable, from the instruments the buzzing of flies. . . . *Israel in Egypt* teems with imita-

tions of nature, impressive in their realism. 'He gave them hailstones' is one of the greatest replicas of storm in the history of music. In 'He sent a great darkness' is all the heaviness of profound and pressing night, and again in 'He led them through the deep' one hears the rolling of great waters."

The second part of the oratorio is entitled "Song of Moses," and includes a duet for two basses entitled "The Lord Is a Man of War," one of the most celebrated of Handel's vocal pieces. This part includes some beautiful writing for solo tenor and alto, and closes majestically with a double chorus which consists of Miriam's song of triumph.

Recommended recordings: "But as for His People," and "Moses and His Children," C-68412D (Leeds Festival Chorus and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra—Beecham; "The Lord Is a Man of War," C-DX585 (McEachern; Williams).

### *Messiah*

The first performance of *Messiah*—Handel's crowning masterpiece—was given on April 13, 1742 at the Music Hall in Fishamble Street, in Dublin, Ireland. The composer conducted. (To be technically exact, however, it should be said that the first performance had been given a week earlier, on April 8—being the last general rehearsal, to which holders of tickets for the regular concert were admitted.) That the world première of *Messiah* took place in Dublin was the result of an invitation to Handel, late in 1741, from the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and the governors of three charitable organizations. They asked him to come to the Irish capital to direct a performance of one of his works for charity.

The invitation arrived at a psychological moment. Handel's fortunes in London were at their lowest ebb. Several of his operas had failed. He was in bankruptcy; there was a moment when he was actually in danger of being sent to a debtors' prison. Petty rivalries smothered his spirits. Society deserted him. He was a broken man, and it was said he was through as a composer.

Handel now hoped that in Ireland he might be able to rehabilitate his reputation and his fortunes. Besides, he had just completed his new oratorio, which he knew to be his greatest work, and the invitation from Ireland offered him an enviable opportunity to reveal his new work to the world.

This new work was *Messiah*, composed in 1741 in the white heat of inspiration. He had written its first part in seven days, the second part in nine days, the third part in six days. In less than twenty-five days the entire masterpiece was completed. "It was the achievement of a giant inspired," wrote Newman Flower. "Handel was unconscious of the world during that time, unconscious of its press and call. His whole mind was in a trance. He did not leave the house; his man servant brought him food, and as often as not returned in an hour to the room to find the food untouched, and his master staring into vacancy. When he had completed Part II, with the 'Hallelujah Chorus,' his servant found him at the table, tears streaming from his eyes. 'I did think I did see all Heaven before me, and the great God himself!' he exclaimed. . . .

Never in his life had he experienced the same emotional sense, and he never experienced it again."

In Dublin, Handel's great fame had not waned, and the première was eagerly awaited. The papers were full of the event, and the house was sold out. The Dublin papers begged the women in the audience not to wear hoops, and the gentlemen to leave their swords at home, so that there might be a little more comfort for all.

The audience was profoundly moved by the music. "Words are wanting to express the exquisite delight it afforded the admiring crowded audience," reported the *Faulkner Journal*. Another Dublin critic wrote as follows about the music: "The sublime, the grand, and the tender, adapted to the most elevated, majestic and moving words, conspired to transport the ravished heart and ear."

The London première of *Messiah* took place a year later—in March 1743—and it was on this occasion that the tradition connected with the "Hallelujah Chorus" arose. When the singers burst into this chorus, the King—George II—was so moved that he spontaneously stood up in his box, the audience followed suit, and all remained standing until the chorus ended. A custom was thus established that persists to this day whenever *Messiah* is performed.

It was while directing a later performance of this masterpiece—on April 6, 1750—that Handel was stricken with a fainting spell that introduced his fatal illness. Thus, fittingly, the last performance Handel conducted was that of his greatest work; eight days after this performance, its composer was dead.

"The work is too well known to require extended comment," wrote César Saerchinger. "Let us only remind the reader of the exquisite beauty of such lyric passages as 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' 'How beautiful are the feet,' and 'Behold and see,' which are among the rarest gems of aria form in our possession. Powerful and passionate expressions such as occur in 'The people that walked in darkness' are as rare in the literature of dramatic music, while the highly dramatic recitatives like 'Thy rebuke hath broken,' are without question, one of the completest realizations of the ideal of Peri and Monteverdi. The glorious choral effects in the 'Hallelujah Chorus,' the stirring polyphony, now simultaneous, now imitative, reflect a potency and spiritual elevation that will perhaps never be surpassed. Lastly, let us not forget the beautiful 'Pastoral Symphony' in which the exquisite Calabrian melody, the song of the piferari, that Handel heard in the early days in Rome, is introduced."

Recommended recording: CM-271 (Soloists, B.B.C. Chorus, London Symphony Orchestra—Beecham).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

Concerning Handel's orchestral music, Romain Rolland wrote: "He had . . . an exquisite sense of form. No German surpassed him in the art of writing beautiful melodic lines. Mozart and Hasse alone were his equals in this.

. . . He did not work so much through the brilliancy, variety, and novelty of his tone-colors, as by the beauty of his designs, and his effects of light and shade. With a voluntarily restrained palette, and by satisfying himself with the sober colors of the strings, he yet was able to produce surprising and thrilling effects. Volbach has shown that he had less recourse to the contrast and mixing of instruments than to the division of the same family of instruments into different groups. On the other hand, Handel, when he considered it advisable, reduced his instrumental forces by suppressing the violin and the second violin, whose places were taken by the harpsichord. All his orchestral art is in the true instinct of balance and economy which, with the most restricted means in managing a few colors, yet knows how to obtain as powerful impressions as our musicians today, with their crowded palette."

For the Concerti Grossi see above: Concertos.

### *The Royal Fireworks Music*

In 1748-49, the peace signed at Aix-la-Chapelle ended hostilities between the English and the French. In London, the treaty was celebrated with great ceremony. Handel was commissioned by the court to write music for the peace celebration which was scheduled to take place in Green Park, London. Handel's music was so eagerly and impatiently awaited that, when he rehearsed it at Vauxhall Gardens across the river, six days before the celebration, twelve thousand people attended—traffic being held up on London Bridge for over three hours. The music was to be preceded by one hundred and one brass cannon thundering a Royal salute announcing the beginning of the fireworks. Then Handel's music was to be played, with eighteen smaller cannon firing single shots during the performance.

Handel's music was a triumph—as it turned out, the only triumph of the entire celebration. For a fire started accidentally by the fireworks set the great building ablaze and sent the people into a stampede, thus converting a great event into an outright fiasco. The King, George II, realized that Handel's music was the one saving feature of a rather shabby affair, and therefore—when Handel later performed the work again, for the benefit of the Foundling Hospital—subscribed two thousand pounds out of his esteem for the music.

While less consistently inspired than its more famous brother, the *Water Music*, the *Fireworks Music* nevertheless is of inexhaustible charm. It comprises an overture, a Largo alla Siciliana (written to commemorate the peace), an Allegro (descriptive of the joy of the occasion), a Bourree, and two Minuets. The work is scored for wind instruments and drums.

Recommended recording: CM-X51 (London Philharmonic—Harty).

### *Water Music*

The legend concerning the origin of the *Water Music* refuses to die. The story goes that Handel had enraged his employer, the Elector George of

Hanover, by his prolonged absence in England. When in 1714 the Elector mounted the throne of England as George I, Handel was in an embarrassing position; but two of his friends planned a tactful reconciliation between the composer and the king. A royal water party was to take place on the Thames in honor of the new king, and Handel's friends arranged to have the royal barge followed by a band of musicians performing music Handel had written expressly for the occasion. And—so the story goes—the consequence was that Handel's suite, composed in his most ingratiating vein, so seduced the king that on learning the composer's identity he forgave Handel and bestowed on him a life pension of two hundred pounds.

Unfortunately this story seems to have been made up out of whole cloth. A document in the Berlin archives (a report by the Brandenburg envoy to the English court) proves that the *Water Music* was composed not in 1714 but in 1717, and under altogether different circumstances. "Some weeks ago," wrote the envoy in a document dated July 19, 1717, "the King expressed a wish to Baron von Kilmanseck to have a concert on the river by subscription, like the masquerades this winter which the King attended assiduously on each occasion." The document then went on to describe the concert: "By the side of the Royal Barge was that of the musicians to the number of fifty who played all kinds of instruments, viz., trumpets, hunting horns, oboes, bassoons, German flutes, French *flûts à bec*, violins and basses, but without voices. This concert was composed expressly for the occasion by the famous Handel. . . . It was so strongly approved by H.M. that he commanded it to be repeated, once before and once after supper, although it took an hour for each performance."

Though the long-accepted tradition about the *Water Music* is thus, once and for all, proved apocryphal, there is nothing legendary about the music's permanent capacity to enchant audiences. It is light, tuneful, and varied, consisting of six movements: Allegro, Air, Bourree, Hornpipe, Andante, Allegro deciso.

Recommended recording: V-8550-1 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

## PIANO MUSIC

Handel was not at his best in writing for the harpsichord. He wrote sixteen suites, two chaconnes, and six fugues which are attractive, but certainly not of the stature of his greatest works. For one thing, Handel did not write gratefully for the harpsichord. He frequently wrote his keyboard pieces with the idea that they were to be used interchangeably for harpsichord and organ—as if the same style were adapted to both instruments. Besides his general inability to realize the fullest possibilities of the harpsichord, his keyboard music is usually the most formal of his works—occasionally charming in melodic content, occasionally intriguing in mood, but usually of second-rate inspiration. Too frequently it has the quality of a manufactured item.

*The Harmonious Blacksmith*

The so-called *Harmonious Blacksmith*—theme and variations—is actually a movement from Handel's fifth harpsichord suite. Like the *Water Music*, the *Harmonious Blacksmith* has inspired a story that is legend, not fact. The story goes that Handel one day sought refuge from a storm in a blacksmith's shop and was inspired to compose the melody for his variations by the even beat of the hammer on the anvil. Actually Handel himself never applied the name "Harmonious Blacksmith" to this music. It was so christened at some date after 1820 as the result of a curious circumstance. A blacksmith's apprentice in Bath loved this music and always sang it, much to the amusement of his friends, who called him the "harmonious blacksmith." When the Handel piece was published independently in Bath in or about 1822, the publisher decided to affix to it the amusing title *The Harmonious Blacksmith*. In 1835, an anonymous letter writer to the *London Times* first suggested the legendary history of the composition. After that the legend grew and developed, and the blacksmith was actually identified and a monument was created to him as the inspirer of this work! *The Harmonious Blacksmith* is not, despite its popularity, a great work. The theme is pleasing enough—buoyant, mobile; but the variations betray a rather routine imagination. It is good, workmanlike music, but hardly reaching any perceptible depths of expression. There is no denying, however, its capacity to provide pleasure to the listener.

Recommended recording: V-1193 (Landowska).

# HANSON

HOWARD HANSON, b. Wahoo, Nebraska, 1896. After completing his music study at the Institute of Musical Art in New York, and academic study at Northwestern University, he became professor of theory and composition at the College of the Pacific in San José, California, and later was made Dean of the Conservatory of Fine Arts. In 1921, he won the Prix de Rome. Upon his return he became director of the Eastman School of Music, a post he holds at the present time.

HOWARD HANSON is a romantic composer who brings to most of his works a fine feeling for beauty. He is a conservative composer in his preference for the accepted forms and idioms; he has no interest in breaking new ground. His aim is to write sincerely, simply—without the encumbrance of theories. As John Tasker Howard wrote: "If he has a particular artistic creed, it is a belief in the necessity for absolute freedom of the creative expression."

## OPERA

*Merry Mount*

In three acts, book by Richard L. Stokes, introduced at the Metropolitan Opera House on February 10, 1934.

The opera *Merry Mount* draws on early New England for its setting. Bradford, a clergyman, is disturbed by unholy dreams. Tewke suggests the remedy of marriage—with Tewke's daughter. The arrival of Cavaliers, and with them the attractive Lady Marigold Sandys, revives Bradford's mental disturbance, for Lady Marigold is to be married to Gower Lackland. On Merry Mount, where a worldly festival takes place, Marigold's wedding is postponed by the sudden arrival of Puritans. In the confusion that follows, the Indians are aroused. Bradford takes Lady Marigold into the forest and there confesses that he loves her. Gower follows them, and Bradford kills him. Fatigued, Bradford falls asleep—to dream that he is in Hell, with Gower as Lucifer; still dreaming, he kills Gower again and takes Marigold for himself. When he awakens, he finds at his side Tewke's daughter, who tells him that the Indians have ravaged their village. The surviving villagers point to Lady Marigold as the cause of all the trouble. Bradford, however, has not forgotten his passion. He abandons God, seizes Lady Marigold, and together they rush through the flames of the burning church.

A work of great musicianship, good taste, and deep feeling, *Merry Mount* was accepted by critics as a major American achievement. "Mr. Hanson's score is impressive," wrote Lawrence Gilman, "in its ease of workmanship, its resourcefulness and maturity of technique. . . . At its best, as in the more puissant choruses, it is moving and individual and expressive."

Recommended recording: " 'Tis an earth defiled," V-7959 (Tibbett).

## SYMPHONIES

*Symphony No. 1 in E minor, "Nordic"*

Hanson composed his first symphony (Op. 21) in Rome in 1922, and soon after this he himself directed its first performance at the Augusteo. On the flyleaf of his original score, he appended the following motto: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

The symphony is in three movements: Andante solenne; Allegro con fuoco. Andante teneramente, con semplicità. Allegro con fuoco; Finale.

The composer himself has analyzed the symphony as follows: "Constructed in freely classical form, the symphony is cyclical, the first movement containing the material upon which the entire symphony is based. This movement, strongly Nordic in character, sings of the solemnity, austerity, and grandeur of the North, of its restless surging and strife, of its sombreness and melancholy. The second movement, which is inscribed 'To My Mother,' is in marked

contrast, peaceful in character, with the feeling of wistful sadness. The third movement, inscribed 'To My Father,' is rugged and fiery in spirit, and it is in this movement that the composer pays tribute to his love of the folk songs of Sweden in several themes of folk-like character, one of which is an actual folk tune. The Finale, which follows the third movement without pause, begins with a reiteration of the opening theme of the symphony, and serves as a coda for the entire work."

Recommended recording: VM-973 (Eastman Rochester Symphony—Hanson).

### *Symphony No. 2, "Romantic"*

This symphony (Op. 30) was commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra for its fiftieth anniversary season, and was introduced by that orchestra on November 28, 1930.

"My second symphony [in the composer's own explanation] represents my escape from the rather bitter type of modern musical realism which occupies so large a place in contemporary thought. . . . I have aimed in this symphony to create a work that was young in spirit, lyrical and romantic in temperament, and simple and direct in expression. The work is in three movements. The first, Adagio—Allegro moderato, begins with an atmospheric introduction in the woodwinds joined first by the horns, then the strings and finally the brasschoir, and then subsiding. The principal theme is announced by four horns with an accompaniment of strings and woodwinds, and is imitated in turn by the trumpets, woodwind, and strings. An episodic theme appears quietly in the oboe and then in the solo horn. A transition leads into a subordinate theme, with the theme itself in the strings and a counter-subject in the solo horn. The development section now follows. . . . The climax of the development section leads directly to the return of the principal theme in the original key by the trumpets . . . The movement concludes quietly in a short coda.

"The second movement, Andante con tenerezza, begins with its principal theme announced by the woodwinds with a sustained string accompaniment. An interlude in the brass, taken from the introduction of the first movement and interrupted by florid passages in the woodwinds, develops into a subordinate theme, which is taken from the horn solo of the first movement.

"The third movement, Allegro con brio, begins with a vigorous accompaniment figure in strings and woodwinds, the principal theme of the movement—reminiscent of the first movement—entering in the four horns and later in the basses. The subordinate theme, Molto meno mosso, is announced first by the 'cellos and then taken up by the English horn, the development of which leads into the middle section. . . . A brief coda . . . leads to a final fanfare and the end of the symphony."

Recommended recording: VM-648 (Eastman-Rochester Symphony Orchestra—Hanson).



# HARRIS

ROY HARRIS, b. Lincoln County, Oklahoma, 1898. Studied with Arthur Farwell in California and, after winning a Guggenheim Fellowship, with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. After 1931 his fame soared, and he immediately became accepted as one of the leading American composers. For a few years, he was head of the composition department at Westminster Choir School. He later became composer-in-residence, first at Cornell University, and then at Colorado College.

HARRIS likes to speak of himself as a "modern classicist." He often writes in a fluid counterpoint suggestive of the sixteenth century. The Harris fingerprints, by which his best works are recognizable, are to be found in the mobility of his music—its graceful and uninterrupted movement; in the long melodic line that grows and evolves and matures through many bars; and in his striking harmonic and rhythmic structure, of a sharpness that gives Harris his ever-present modernity. Unless the listener is critically attentive to this music he is likely to lose himself in the adroit net of Harris's counterpoint, or to lose the trend of the melodic idea long before it has been completely realized. Harris's best music is abstract, depending entirely on its musical logic for its appeal.

Though Harris rarely calls upon indigenous musical subjects, his music is unquestionably and unmistakably American. It has the expanse of the Western plains, the energy, youth, health, and vitality of a young, growing country. There is nothing effete or decadent about it. As *Modern Music* said of his work: "Here is music of the bleak and barren expanses of Western Kansas, of the brooding prairie night, of the fast darkness of the American soul, of its despair and its courage, its defeat and its triumph, its struggles and aspirations."

## QUARTET

### *String Quartet No. 3*

Harris composed this work in 1938. It is not a string quartet in the traditional meaning of that form, but, rather, comprises four preludes and fugues.

Like so many other Harris works, this quartet is a synthesis of the past and the present. The very form (preludes and fugues) suggests the past. The preludes are notable for the cleverness with which Harris puts to use all the devices of counterpoint; the fugues have Bach-like architectural designs, are sharp in outline and skilful in thematic growth. The themes themselves are modal in scales, and have an almost medieval flavor.

Yet this work does not give the impression of being archaic. It has characteristic Harris strength, force, directness. The voice is most assuredly that of the present, even though the body is of the past—and the listener is never conscious of contradictions.

Harris has often expressed a partiality for this work as the most successful realization of his tonal and esthetic beliefs.

In 1939, the Roth Quartet selected this work to represent American chamber music at the International Conference of Musicologists held in New York.

Recommended recording: CM-450 (Roth Quartet).

## QUINTET

### *Quintet for Piano and Strings*

Harris's Quintet for piano and strings, composed in 1937, comprises a passacaglia, cadenza, and fugue. In character and spirit it has a close affinity with the String Quartet No. 3 which it preceded. As in the quartet, a modern expression is couched in old forms. Harris's predilection for counterpoint is again in evidence. There is great tranquillity here, though a feeling for drama is not altogether absent; the writing is the essence of purity. The passacaglia is an elaborate structure of interweaving subjects and demonstrates Harris's exceptional bent for permitting his theme to grow, expand, and develop naturally. After a freely conceived cadenza, of an almost virtuoso character, comes the fugue as a majestic culmination.

Recommended recording: Victor M-752 (Coolidge Quartet; Johana Harris).

## SYMPHONIES

### *Folk Song Symphony*

Harris composed this elaborate work for orchestra and chorus to bring about collaboration between symphony orchestras and the choruses of high schools, colleges, and communities throughout the country. It was introduced in excerpts at Rochester, under the baton of Howard Hanson, on April 25, 1940. Its first complete performance took place in Cleveland, Rudolf Ringwall directing the Cleveland Orchestra. Subsequently, the work won a prize of \$500 awarded by the National Committee for Music Appreciation for the best symphonic work of the season.

The work abounds with quotations from American folk music. It is in seven movements, five of which are sung. They are: I. "Welcome Party"; II. "Western Cowboy"; III. "Interlude"; IV. "Mountain Love Song"; V. "Interlude"; VI. "Negro Fantasy"; VII. "Finale." Among the familiar American tunes heard in the work are "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" (first movement); familiar cowboy melodies, including "Oh, Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie" (second movement); fiddle tunes (third movement); "The Blackbird and the Crow," and "Jump, My Lady" (fifth movement).

### *Symphony No. 3*

This symphony, composed in 1939, is perhaps the most successful of Harris's works. It has been performed by practically every major American orchestra and has won the acclamation of the music public. It is in a single movement

and is a work of great dramatic power and strength. Harris, in analyzing the symphony, has pointed out five principal sections: The first is tragic, in which the principal theme is sounded by the strings in the low sonorities; the second is lyric; the third is a pastoral section for woodwinds with a polytonal string background; the fourth is a fugue, tragic in character; and the fifth, while also tragic, achieves great dramatic intensity through an overpowering climax, the suspense of which is heightened by use of the drums.

Recommended recording: Victor M-651 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

## HAYDN

FRANZ JOSEF HAYDN, b. Rohrau, 1732. As a boy he was a member of the choir school of St. Stephen's Church in Vienna. He was dismissed in his seventeenth year when his voice broke. He held various musical posts until he became Kapellmeister for Count Morzin. This office was succeeded by a more important one, that of Kapellmeister for Count Esterházy in Eisenstadt. He held this post for twenty-five years, directing concerts and composing music. In 1791, and again in 1794, he visited London and there scored some of his most notable triumphs. Upon his return to Vienna he found himself accepted as the greatest of Austrian composers. He died in Vienna in 1809.

HAYDN is frequently spoken of as the "father of instrumental music," and it is a designation he well deserves. He solidified the sonata form of Philipp Emanuel Bach and breathed into it such vital genius that it became one of the most pliant forms of musical expression. He definitely established the form of the symphony, preparing the way for Mozart and Beethoven. He was the father of the string quartet, and it was from him that Mozart acquired his knowledge of string-quartet writing. He enriched the harmonic language of his day, increased the resources of orchestration, deepened the powers of musical expression.

J. Cuthbert Hadden has thus summed up Haydn's qualities as a composer: "To say that a composition is 'Haydnish' is to express in one word what is well understood by all intelligent amateurs. Haydn's music is like his character—clear, straightforward, fresh and winning, without the slightest trace of affectation or morbidity. Its perfect transparency, its firmness of design, its fluency of instrumental language, the beauty and inexhaustible wealth of its melody, its studied moderation, its childlike cheerfulness—these are some of the qualities which mark the style of this most genial of all composers."

Gaiety, lightness, cheerfulness—these have long been accepted as traits of Haydn's music. But it would do Haydn a grave disservice if we were to find

nothing more. As a matter of fact, he could be deeply moving in his tragedy, and he could write with rare intensity: A quartet like the one in F minor, Op. 20, No. 5, has tragic undertones which suggest Beethoven. He can be spacious and expansive in his structure and ideas, as in some of his best "Salomon" symphonies. In *The Creation* he achieved moments of genuine sublimity. Haydn's genius does not pluck on one string alone.

One of the distinguishing traits of Haydn's work is his frequent use of Croatian folk music for his melodic material. "The Croatian melodies," explained W. H. Hadow, "are bright, sensitive, piquant, but they seldom rise to any high level of dignity or earnestness. They belong to a temper which is marked rather by feeling and imagination than by any sustained breadth of thought, and hence, while they enrich their own field of art with great beauty, there are certain frontiers which they rarely cross, and from which, if crossed, they soon return." Many of Haydn's original melodies, even, are characterized by typical rhythmic and melodic features of Croatian folk songs. However, to these Croatian traits, Haydn added his usually high inspiration and sensitivity and produced a type of melody which, for the most part, is unmistakably his.

## ORATORIO

### *The Creation*

Haydn was a deeply religious man, and it is perhaps to be expected that his greatest work should be religious in character. Habitually, he began and ended his manuscripts with the words: "*In nomine Domini*," and "*Laus Deo*." But, as he himself said, never was he so pious as when he wrote *The Creation*. "Daily I fell on my knees and begged God to vouchsafe me strength for the fortunate outcome of my work."

*The Creation* was fruit of Haydn's old age. He had long wanted to write an oratorio in the manner of Handel whom he admired so profoundly, and when Salomon suggested that he do so, the advice fell on all-too willing ears. It is more than probable that Salomon himself provided Haydn with the text which had been prepared by an Englishman named Liddell, who combined sections from the Genesis and Milton's *Paradise Lost* (a text, incidentally, which had originally been intended for Handel).

It took Haydn eighteen months to write his oratorio. To fully appreciate its pervading tone of spirituality, we must remember that he wrote it with rare religious humility and devotion. "I felt myself so penetrated with religious feeling that before I sat down to the pianoforte I prayed to God with earnestness that He would enable me to praise Him worthily."

*The Creation* was first performed at the Schwarzenberg Palace in Vienna on April 29, 1798; Haydn himself conducted. "One moment I was as cold as ice, and next I seemed on fire. More than once I thought I should have a fit." A year later, the first public performance took place.

The success of *The Creation* was instantaneous. Choral societies were founded in Austria expressly to perform it. It is interesting that the last concert heard by Haydn was a performance of this very work, in March of 1808, Salieri conducting.

The overture of the oratorio is an eloquent tonal depiction of the resolution of world chaos into order, and the conversion of the darkness into light. The tone painting in this overture (and in subsequent sequences translating musically the voices of animals) makes Haydn one of the first great writers of program music. There follows the full story of the Creation through the six days, told musically with eloquence and majesty, sometimes with literalness, at other times with pervading spiritual beauty. Haydn in this work achieves some rare heights of lyric writing in arias like "With Verdure Clad," and "On Mighty Wings." His choral writing—as in "Let There Be Light," "The Heavens Are Telling," and "Achieved Is the Glorious Work"—had rare power and poignancy.

Perhaps there are moments in his programmatic writing in which a touch of naiveté can be detected; perhaps there is, at moments, a suggestion of labored writing. But as a whole *The Creation* is Haydn's crowning masterpiece, a work of rare inspiration and religious majesty. In it speaks the voice of a genius who, on the threshold of death, has had a glimpse of other and greater worlds.

Recommended recordings: "Rolling in Foaming Billows," V-9654 (Radford); "The Heavens Are Telling," V-11960 (Royal Choral Society; London Philharmonic—Sargent); "On Mighty Wings," V-15182 (Norena); "Achieved is the Glorious Work," V-11960 (Royal Choral Society; London Philharmonic—Sargent).

## QUARTETS

It was at the encouragement of a devoted musical amateur, Fürnberg, that in 1750 Haydn composed his first string quartet. The form so captivated him that during the next few months he created one string quartet after another. This was one of Haydn's happiest mediums and the form in which (together with the symphony) he was of greatest historic importance.

The string quartet is believed by some to have been born with Gregorio Allegri, but it was Corelli who first realized a chamber-music style in the first four volumes of his instrumental sonatas: more than any other composer of his time, Corelli, with his lucidity, taught musicians how to write effectively for small combinations of stringed instruments. Under Boccherini and Dittersdorf the form developed rapidly and was soon ready for the hands of a master; and it was just such a master, Haydn, who crystallized it once and for all.

The earliest of Haydn's eighty-three quartets are obviously modeled after Boccherini. They are not, strictly speaking, quartets, but small suites for four string instruments. They are usually in five movements, two of them minuets, each movement brief, episodic, and slight in texture. It was not until Haydn

had composed almost forty quartets that he began to adopt a four-movement form, and extended both his structure and his ideas. With the six quartets in the Op. 20 group (1772) he was beginning to strike paths of his own. "Every page of the six quartets of Op. 20," wrote Cobbett, "is of historic and aesthetic importance; and though the total results still leave Haydn with a long road to travel, there is perhaps no single or sextuple opus in the history of instrumental music which has achieved so much or achieved it so quietly."

Gradually, as Franz Bellinger has said, "he filled the rather stiff and formal outline with ideas that are graceful and charming, even though they may sound somewhat elementary to modern ears. He recognized the fact that in the quartet, each individual part must not be treated as a solo, nor yet should the others be made to supply a mere accompaniment to the remainder. Each must have its role, according to the capacity of the instrument and the balance of the part."

Thus Haydn eventually achieved in his quartet a perfection of form in which transparency, neatness and clarity dominated. He brought to life each of the four voices, individualizing them, yet unifying them under a common will. Mozart learned a valuable lesson in writing string quartets from Haydn, and profited much from the examples which the older man set for him.

With his last quartets, Haydn entered (as he himself knew) an altogether new period of development. The master who had formerly influenced Mozart so profoundly was now (wonderful to note!) to be influenced, in turn, by Mozart. Henceforth, Mozart is Haydn's model, and to Haydn's quartets comes an enrichment of speech and of spiritual values, with a greater daring in use of harmony and thematic development. His music grows less stylized, less formal, freer, more emotional, subtler and more dramatic. "So advanced in character are some of Haydn's mature movements," wrote Thomas F. Dunhill, "that they may be regarded as connecting links between Mozart and Beethoven in the middle period."

Of Haydn's best quartets, Bellinger wrote that they "exhibit not only a well-established form and a fine perception of the relation of the instruments, but also the more spiritual qualities—tenderness, playfulness, pathos. He is not often romantic, nor is there any trace of far-fetched mannerisms or fads. He gave the form a life and freshness which at once secured its popularity, even though the more scientific musicians of his day were inclined to regard it with suspicion, as a trifling innovation. Nevertheless . . . it was from Haydn that Mozart, at least, learned its use."

Of Haydn's many quartets, at least forty make rewarding listening and have won a permanent place in the repertory. It is possible, however, to single out a few of the most famous quartets which are brilliant examples of Haydn's genius in this form, and which are heard most often.

*Quartet in E Flat Major, Op. 50, No. 3*, which Donald Francis Tovey called one of the greatest of all Haydn quartets. This is the Haydn with whom we are familiar—the gay, witty, light-hearted musician who could be

ebullient and light-spirited. Structurally, it is the essence of perfection. While for deeper and more moving thoughts we must turn elsewhere, this quartet remains a cameo of artistic elegance, a joy to listen to.

*Quartet in D Major*, Op. 64, No. 5, known as the "Lark" Quartet because of the buoyant character of the opening subject of the first movement.

*Quartet in D Minor*, Op. 76, No. 2, one of the best-integrated of all Haydn's quartets. All movements are in the same key, and all have a spiritual kinship to each other. It is sometimes called the "Quinten" Quartet because the opening theme of the first movement is in fifths. The slow movement, *Andante e piu tosto allegretto*, is one of the most spiritual pages written by Haydn.

*Quartet in C Major*, Op. 76, No. 3, the "Emperor" Quartet—so-called because Haydn incorporated into the work the Austrian national anthem which he had written in 1777 at the request of the Emperor. This melody appears in the second movement (*Poco Adagio cantabile*) and is embellished by a series of variations.

*Quartet in D Major*, Op. 76, No. 5, sometimes spoken of as the "Largo" Quartet because its slow movement is one of the most heavenly pages of beauty to be found in quartet literature.

Recommended recordings: Quartet in F major, Op. 3, No. 5; Quartet in E-flat major, Op. 33, No. 2; Quartet in E-flat major, Op. 64, No. 6; Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 71, No. 1; VM-525 (Pro-Arte).

Quartet in E-flat major, Op. 50, No. 3; Quartet in C major, Op. 76, No. 3, "Emperor"; Quartet in F minor, Op. 20, No. 5; VM-526 (Pro-Arte).

Quartet in D major, Op. 20, No. 4; Quartet in F major, Op. 74, No. 2; Quartet in F major, Op. 77, No. 2; VM-527 (Pro-Arte).

Quartet in C major, Op. 1, No. 6; Quartet in E major, Op. 54, No. 3; Quartet in A major, Op. 55, No. 1; Quartet in G major, Op. 64, No. 4. VM-528 (Pro-Arte).

Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 3, No. 4; Quartet in D major, Op. 50, No. 6, "Frog"; Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 64, No. 3; Quartet in C major, Op. 74, No. 1. VM-689 (Pro-Arte).

Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 1, No. 1; Quartet in E-flat major, Op. 20, No. 1; Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 55, No. 3; Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 76, No. 4, "Sunrise." VM-595 (Pro-Arte).

## SONATAS

Haydn admired the piano sonatas of Philipp Emanuel Bach. As a student, he spent his evenings poring over Bach's music and committing it to memory. "For what I know, I have to thank Philipp Emanuel Bach," he confessed. Inevitably, he was greatly influenced by Bach's manner of writing for the keyboard. Haydn's earliest sonatas openly reveal their derivation from those of Bach. But, as in the case of the string quartet and the symphony, Haydn did not long remain the imitator. He took the elements of the sonata form as suggested in Bach's sonatas and developed them into a magnificent structure, fully and completely realized.

Haydn composed forty-two sonatas for the piano. "The masterpieces

among Haydn's sonatas . . . astonish by their order, regularity, fluency, harmony, and roundness," wrote J. Cuthbert Hadden, "and by their splendid development into full and complete growth out of the sometimes apparently unimportant germs. Naturally his sonatas are not all of equal quality. . . . Some are old-fashioned and some second-rate. But, like the symphonies, they are all of historical value as showing the development not only of the form but of the composer's powers. In several of the sonatas the part-writing strikes one as being somewhat poor and meagre; in others there is, to the modern ear, a surfeiting indulgence in those turns, arpeggios, and other ornaments which were inseparable from the nature of the harpsichord and the earliest pianoforte with their thin tones and want of sustaining power. . . . As it is, the changes which have been made in the classical sonata form since his day are merely changes of detail. To him is due the fixity of the form."

The best of Haydn's sonatas—with which every student of the piano is familiar—are so lucid in their form and structure, and so full of charming ideas, that they require only a single hearing to be appreciated. Representative of the best of Haydn's sonatas are the C major (Breitkopf and Härtel 35), the D major (B. & H. 37), and the F major (B. & H. 23).

Recommended recording: Sonata in D major, CM-X158 (Wolff).

## SYMPHONIES

Haydn acquired the symphonic form from pioneers like Philipp Emanuel Bach, Karl Stamitz, and Georg Matthias Monn. But he brought it to such an advanced stage of artistic and structural development that we must forgive some historians for loosely calling him "the father of the symphony." Certainly the symphonies he wrote, after a period of apprenticeship, were fuller in orchestration, more consummate in their feeling for form, more imposing in their construction than anything that had preceded them. "His predecessors," wrote Parry, "had always written rather carelessly and hastily for the band, and hardly ever tried to get refined and original effects from the use of their instruments, but he naturally applied his mind more earnestly to the matter in hand and found out new ways of contrasting and combining the tones of different members of his orchestra, and getting a fuller and richer effect out of the mass of them when they were playing. In the actual style of music, too, he made great advances; in his hands, symphonies became by degrees more vigorous and, at the same time, more really musical."

Haydn composed more than a hundred symphonies. His earliest—the first of which was written soon after his appointment as Kapellmeister to Count Morzin in 1759—are not, strictly speaking, symphonies, but usually cassations and serenades. Not until after 1770 did the symphony acquire in his hands a definite character and personality. Several important influences bore on Haydn's development after 1770. For one thing, he had learned in his



quartet-writing about thematic development and the application of the sonata form to instrumental music. Secondly, he abandoned the Italian manner of writing for instruments and arrived at a truly symphonic style. Third, he had come into intimacy with Mozart's music and had begun to profit by the younger man's richer and profounder inventiveness.

It was then that Haydn began to compose his masterpieces in the symphony form. With the "Farewell" Symphony (1772) and the "Maria Theresa" Symphony (1772) we can already begin to discern the hand of the master. The master becomes even more evident in the set of symphonies which Haydn composed for Paris, including "*L'Ours*," "*La Reine*," and the G major, No. 88.

But Haydn at his greatest is heard in the set of twelve symphonies which he composed after 1791 for his two visits to London, on a commission by the impresario, Johann Peter Salomon. By this time, Haydn had fully assimilated the Mozart influence. There is, however, no question of imitation in these works. What we have here is the enrichment that comes when one great composer is brought to new avenues of expression through contact with the idiom of another. These symphonies, as Parry pointed out, "are as much the crown of his fame as the Prague and Vienna symphonies are of Mozart's. The crudity of his earlier orchestral writing has entirely disappeared; and though he never succeeds in getting such a perfectly mellow equal tone as Mozart's, he treats all his instruments with absolute freedom and fitness. . . . Mozart achieves a degree of beauty in his slow movements to which Haydn does not attain; but in the solid allegros, Haydn is more genuinely vigorous than Mozart. . . . In the minuet movements . . . Mozart's are certainly the most popular, but Haydn's dance tunes have some of the ring that comes of his lineage. . . . Even to the last there is a flavor of rusticity about it. His humor and his merriment are those of the simple honest peasant, while Mozart's is the wit of a man of world."

Haydn's symphonies are so easily assimilable at first hearing that they require little analysis. Their charm is on the surface, for all to enjoy. It is possible to comment only on a few of the most famous.

### *Symphony in F-sharp minor, "Farewell"*

Haydn's Symphony No. 45 was composed during his tenure of the post of Kapellmeister to Esterházy. Haydn wanted to suggest to his employer in some graceful and tactful way that the musicians of his orchestra needed a vacation. He decided to do it through a symphony. The final movement begins briskly only to lapse into an Adagio as, one by one, the musicians blow out the candles on their stands and depart from the stage. Only two violinists are left but they, too, soon depart, leaving only Haydn at the head of the orchestra. Esterházy could take the hint. The following day the entire orchestra was permitted to leave for a well-earned rest.

Recommended recording: CM-205 (London Symphony—Wood).

*Symphony in C major, "Toy"*

During his Esterházy period, Haydn one day had to go to Berchtesgaden, Bavaria. While there he picked up some toy musical instruments which intrigued him. The peculiar tone qualities of these instruments inspired his sense of fun and he decided to write a little symphony for them (Op. 62). He used only three regular instruments—two violins and a bass. The other instruments were: a penny trumpet (in G); a quail-call (in F); a rattle; a cuckoo (in G and E); a screech-owl whistle; a drum (in G); and a triangle. It is, of course, only a very slight work with no attempt at achieving symphonic proportions, but it is good fun, and a gem of juvenile music.

Recommended recording: C-7242 (Orchestra—Weingartner).

*Symphony in G major*

In 1784, Haydn was commissioned to write symphonies expressly for Paris where he was well-known and admired. He wrote two sets. The music-world of Paris, always prone to adding literary titles, gave names to some of these symphonies. The C major is known as the "Bear"; the G minor as the "Hen"; the B-flat as the "Queen of France." The titles, however, have little or no relation to the music itself and certainly offer no programmatic interpretation. The symphonies are gay and effervescent. The most famous of the Paris symphonies—and one which eluded Paris's title-giving passion—is the G major (No. 88). Its best pages include the stately and majestic introduction to the first movement, and the entire second movement, which is a beautiful song in three-part form.

Recommended recording: VM-454 (NBC Symphony—Toscanini).

*The Salomon Symphonies*

In 1790, the impresario Salomon induced Haydn to visit London to conduct concerts there and to prepare several new symphonies for the visit. He went in 1791 and remained until May 1792, conducting orchestral concerts and presenting six new symphonies. His success in London was greater than any he encountered elsewhere: he became the man of the hour, and was covered with honors. In 1794, he returned for a second visit to London, once again composing a set of six symphonies for the occasion. Thus, in all he wrote twelve symphonies for London which remain the greatest of his productions in this field.

The following are representative of the "Salomon" symphonies:

*Symphony in G major, "Oxford"*: In July 1791 Haydn attended the Oxford Commemoration, at which ceremony the degree of Doctor of Music was conferred on him. For this occasion he composed a new symphony, but because it proved too difficult for the few rehearsals available, he substituted an earlier work which he had composed for Paris. This earlier work is now included in the Salomon group and is referred to as the "Oxford" (No. 92).

*Symphony in G major, "Surprise"*: The name stems from the fact that in the slow movement a loud chord suddenly and precipitately breaks in upon an opening theme of quiet and gentle character. Haydn injected it in a spirit of playfulness. "There," he said, "the ladies will scream." This Symphony is No. 94.

*Symphony in B-flat major*: In the slow movement of this symphony (No. 98). Haydn paid graceful tribute to his hosts by writing a beautiful slow movement in which the principal theme is suggestive of *God Save the King*.

*Symphony in G major, "Military"*: There is nothing particularly military about this symphony (No. 100). It derives its title from the fact that it utilizes certain percussion instruments which were at the time associated with military music.

*Symphony in D major, "Clock"*: The slow movement of this symphony (No. 101) reproduces the inexorable ticking of a clock, Haydn using this as a background for a supple and flowing melody for the strings.

*Symphony in E-flat major, "Drum Roll"*: The opening of the first movement has a roll for drum which has given the symphony (No. 103) the name by which it is now known.

Recommended recordings: *Oxford Symphony*, VM-682 (Paris Conservatory—Walter); *Surprise Symphony*, CM-363 (C.B.S. Symphony—Barlow); *B-flat major Symphony*, No. 98, CM-370 (C.B.S. Symphony—Barlow); *Military Symphony*, VM-472 (Vienna Philharmonic—Walter); *Clock Symphony*, VM-57 (New York Philharmonic—Toscanini); *Drum Roll Symphony*, CM-547 (Hallé Orchestra—Heward).

## HERBERT

VICTOR HERBERT, b. Dublin, 1859. After completing his musical studies, he played the violoncello in leading European orchestras. He came to America in 1886 to serve as 'cellist in the Metropolitan Opera House orchestra. In 1892 he composed his first operetta. In 1898 he became the conductor of the Pittsburg Symphony Orchestra, but he resigned this post five years later to devote himself exclusively to composition. He at once began to compose a series of operettas which placed him among the leaders in that field. He died in New York City in 1924.

VICTOR HERBERT has been called the "prince of operetta composers," earning that designation by virtue of a seemingly endless fund of melodies. His lyricism was fresh, graceful, and seductive and came to him so naturally that he actually had to curb his melodic ideas. To this melodic gift he added a sound compositorial technique.

"His musical ancestor," wrote Deems Taylor, "was Mozart, and the family

of which he was so brilliant a younger son numbered Offenbach, Delibes, Bizet, the Strausses, and Arthur Sullivan among its elders. What he had was what they all had, the gift of song. His music bubbled and sparkled and charmed, and he brought the precious gift of gaiety to an art that often suffers from pretentiousness and self-consciousness of its practitioners. Herbert was a far more important figure in American music than he has ever had the credit for being. His chosen field was operetta . . . and the fact that his medium was primarily a form of entertainment caused self-styled musicians to regard him with a certain measure of condescension. . . . He was a talented composer and a serious one and he knew it. . . . His tunes were neither glorified rhythmic patterns nor harmonic paraphrases. They were pure song, capable of being sung without accompaniment if need be, as pure in outline as the melodies of Schubert or Mozart."

## OPERETTAS

### *Babes in Toyland*

In three acts, book by Glen MacDonough, first performed at the Grand Opera House in Chicago in 1903.

Based upon Mother Goose and characters from Fairyland, the entire action of the operetta takes place in some make-believe land. It is an elaborate extravaganza which has only a slight and sometimes unrecognizable thread of a plot to integrate it.

Mother Hubbard's cottage is seized by the miser, Uncle Barnaby, to whom she owes money. Tom saves the miser from a ducking. In the second act, Master Toymaker sends an evil spirit into his toys; they assume human shapes and slay him. The third act is in the Palace of Justice. Alan is accused of the murder of the Toymaker, but he is saved at the crucial last moment when the miser accidentally drinks poison.

The most famous numbers of this ingratiating operetta are the "March of the Toys," and the song "Toyland," both from Act II.

Recommended recording: VC-33 (Victor Salon Group).

### *Mlle. Modiste*

In two acts, book by Henry Blossom, introduced at the Knickerbocker Theater in New York on December 25, 1905.

The operetta was written for Fritzi Scheff who made the principal role of Fifi her own.

The opening act takes place in Paris. Fifi, a Parisian modiste, has two reigning ambitions: to become a singer and to marry a handsome captain named Etienne. A wealthy American enables her to take lessons. A year later, she is to sing at the castle of Etienne's uncle. The uncle recognizes her and orders her out of the house. The American, however, smuggles her into it again. Her singing so charms the uncle that he now consents to Fifi's marrying his nephew.

The most famous single number of *Mlle. Modiste* is "Kiss Me Again" which Fifi sings in Act I. Almost as well known is "I Want What I Want When I Want It" from Act II.

Recommended recording: VC-33 (Victor Salon Group).

### *Naughty Marietta*

In two acts, book by Rida Johnson Young, first performed at the New York Theatre on November 7, 1910.

Captain Dick Warrington comes to New Orleans to capture the notorious pirate Bras Pique, who is none other than Lieutenant Governor Grandet's son Etienne. Marietta, leaving her convent to see the world, persuades Warrington to get her a boy's disguise. Rudolfo, a marionette showman, employs her, but is infuriated by her incapacity to pull the strings properly. Rudolfo complains to Warrington who is convinced that he does not love the girl. At a grand ball, in the second act, Etienne auctions off his quadroom so that he may be free to marry Marietta whom he loves. Warrington buys the quadroom in order to set her free. Marietta is about to marry Etienne when she learns his true identity. It is then that she discovers she loves Warrington and that Warrington loves her.

This is one of the most melodious of Herbert's operettas and is rich with famous songs, the best known are: "Neath the Southern Moon," and "Italian Street Song" from Act I; "I'm Falling in Love with Someone," and "Ah! Sweet Mystery of Life," both from Act II.

Recommended recording: VC-33 (Victor Salon Group).

## HÉROLD

FERDINAND HÉROLD, b. Paris, 1791. Studied at the Paris Conservatory where he won the Prix de Rome. Upon his return from Italy, he turned to the composition of opera, his first venture being a collaboration with Boïeldieu. For many years he served as accompanist in the Théâtre des Italiens and as choirmaster at the Académie de Musique. He died in Les Ternes in 1833.

HÉROLD, whose *Zampa* is one of the masterpieces in French opéra comique, was, in the opinion of Arthur Pougin, "the most important musician in the first half of the nineteenth century, and his name marks an important epoch in the history of national art. . . . With him, dramatic music freed itself from the fetters which had formerly bound it; it soared fully and freely into the air, definitely and permanently repudiating former formulas."

## OPERA

*Zampa*

In three acts, libretto by Melesville, first presented at the Opéra-Comique in Paris on May 3, 1831. The libretto is faintly suggestive of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.

The pirate, Zampa, lands at Castle Lugano and forces Camille to marry him and to abandon her betrothed, Alphonse. The pirates celebrate the occasion during which, in mockery, Zampa places a wedding ring on a finger of the statue of a girl he has betrayed. To his horror, the statue crooks her finger and refuses to release the ring. In spite of this event, and the attempts of Alphonse to frustrate the wedding, the pirate is married to Camille. After the ceremony, however, Camille escapes. In trying to pursue her, Zampa is blocked by the statue of his one-time beloved, which takes him by the arm and drowns him in the sea, thereby freeing Camille to marry Alphonse.

Strange to say, *Zampa* was not at first successful. Many critics (Berlioz among them) condemned it for some of its lapses in inspiration. Yet posterity has learned to appreciate its many beauties. Here, as B. Jouvin wrote, "the brain, the heart, and the hand of the artist are fraternally combined to produce a complete and unified work. The melody of the composer, overflowing in abundance, is at turns passionate and buoyant. . . . The harmony, endowed with force and with elegance, adopts, under a skilled hand, all the undulations of sonority. . . . But all has not been said when one has praised the melody and the harmony. There is the Song, beautifully attired; the musician takes it by the hand and places it in a setting of instrumentation which has languor, grace, buoyancy, and color."

The overture of *Zampa* is celebrated.

Recommended recording: Overture, V-13647 (Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler).

# HINDEMITH

PAUL HINDEMITH, b. Hanau, 1895. Studied at the Hoch Conservatory with Arnold Mendelssohn and Sekles. In 1915 he became concertmaster of the Frankfurt Opera, rising to post of conductor in 1923. He also founded and played in the Amar String Quartet, which featured programs of modern music. After 1921, he rose to fame as a composer. From 1927 to 1937, he taught a master class in composition at the Berlin Hochschule. In 1935, he was commissioned by the Turkish government to reorganize the musical life of Turkey. In 1937 he came to the United States on an invitation of the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation. He has since then become a member of the music faculty at Yale University.

HINDEMITH, who is one of the most original and forceful of present-day composers, is in the vanguard of the neo-classical school. He combines the most modern devices, including that of atonality, with polyphony that stems from Bach. His music is strong, independent, and unorthodox, but sometimes achieves a radiance of expression not often to be found in the modern school. He has composed innumerable works in every possible form, including many small pieces for pianola, radio, and talking pictures which have been designated by critics as *Gebrauchsmusik* ("workaday music"), a term coined expressly for Hindemith.

## OPERA

### *Cardillac*

In three acts, book by Ferdinand Lion, introduced at the Dresden Opera on November 9, 1926. It was as a consequence of the success of this opera that Hindemith first became internationally famous.

The libretto is based upon the novel of E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Das Fräulein von Scuderi*. In seventeenth-century Paris the goldsmith Cardillac plies his trade. It is soon discovered that a curse pursues all those who buy his works of art. An officer, in love with Cardillac's daughter, is determined to unravel the mystery. He learns that Cardillac is, in reality, a murderer who injects into his artistic moulds a poison that kills those who come into direct contact with it.

One critic, in discussing the form of this opera, pointed out astutely that Hindemith here applies the concerto form. The first act is like the exposition section; the second act, the development; the third act, the recapitulation. Except for this, Hindemith blazed no new trails for opera in this masterpiece. It is traditional in its use of recitatives, arias, and ensemble numbers. Its great strength lies in its remarkable architectonic construction. In style, the opera has the compactness of writing, the terseness of expression, the lucidity of structure and the moving polyphonic beauty that mark Hindemith's best writing for orchestra. There are few moments in modern opera so stirring as the final scene of this opera.

"All Hindemith is in *Cardillac*," wrote Guido Pannain, "all the good and

the bad features of his temperament—a temperament of a revolutionary whom his country's tradition has domesticated—a bold and ardent musician who is also a tenacious and inflexible builder; passionate at the right moment, but always ready to jot down counterpoints or weave fugatos. . . . In this opera there is greater musical work than in almost all the symphonic compositions of the same author."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

*Kammermusik No. 2, for Piano and 12 Instruments*

*Kammermusik No. 3, for 'Cello and 10 Instruments*

*Kammermusik No. 4, for Violin and Chamber Orchestra*

*Kammermusik No. 5, for Viola and Chamber Orchestra*

*Kammermusik No. 6, for Viola D'Amore and Chamber Orchestra*

Hindemith's style as a composer was crystallized in the *Kammermusik No. 2*, which was introduced at the Festival of Modern Music in Venice in 1925. In this work, Hindemith revealed his tendency for writing polyphonically; and his use of counterpoint now became fully integrated. Henceforth, his various *Kammermusik* were to contain the very essence of his creative manner. They were to be a combination of Bach's polyphonic principles with the harmonic, rhythmic, and melodic innovations of the twentieth century. The modern spirit was to be infused into old forms. This music, for all its leanings on seventeenth-century counterpoint, is crisp in idiom, often stingingly acid, strong-fibered in architecture, muscle and sinew rather than heart and nerves. Yet it derives from Bach its sense of perpetual movement, the lucid clarity of its construction, and the inextricable unity which binds it into a coherent whole. It was this strange marriage of modern musical devices with Bach polyphony that tempted more than one critic to speak of these works of Hindemith as "Brandenburg Concertos upside down."

*Kammermusik No. 2*, Op. 36, was composed in 1924; *No. 3*, Op. 36, 1925; *No. 4*, Op. 36, 1924; *No. 5*, Op. 36, 1927; and *No. 6*, Op. 36, 1930.

### *Mathis der Maler Symphony*

In 1934, Hindemith composed an opera entitled *Mathis der Maler*. It was inspired, as its title suggests, by the famous painter Matthias Grünewald, one of the great figures in German art. For a long time, the facts about Grünewald were veiled in an obscurity which only recent research has been able to penetrate. It is now believed that his real name was Matthias Gothart Nithart and that he was born in Würzburg in the middle of the fifteenth century. He was a court painter to the Archbishop Albrecht of Brandenburg, a post he gave up (as Hindemith relates in his opera) because of his fervor for the Reformation. He fought on the side of the Peasants in the Peasants' War, and in the last years of his life abandoned painting for the building of watermills.



The opera was introduced in Zurich in 1938, and a curtailed version of it was performed by the B.B.C. in England in 1939.

Out of the music of the opera, Hindemith developed three orchestral movements which he combined into a symphony. This symphony has proved much more popular than the opera, and, as a matter of fact, is now generally accepted as one of Hindemith's greatest works. The three movements are entitled: I. "Angelic Concert"; II. "Entombment; III. "The Temptation of St. Anthony." In these movements, Hindemith gives a musical description of the pictures found on the world-famous Isenheim altar in Colmar, probably Grünewald's masterpiece. The music is evocative of the Reformation with its faint reminder of the styles of medieval folk songs, and magically reproduces the atmosphere and background of the paintings. Few works of our time are so deeply moving, touched as it is with mysticism and religious fervor, as the *Entombment* movement; and few so dramatically projected as that depicting *The Temptation of St. Anthony*.

The symphony was introduced in Berlin by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Furtwängler conducting, in 1934. It is now history that this concert inspired one of the great political and esthetic battles in Nazi Germany. The *Kulturkammer* pronounced the symphony pernicious as an influence in German music and announced that it did not look with favor on performances of Hindemith's music. What grieved the *Kulturkammer*, however, was not the revolutionary character of Hindemith's music but the fact that his libretto touched on a dangerous subject: the defeat of German liberalism during the Peasants' War. Immediately following the official pronouncement from the *Kulturkammer*, there came public denunciations of Hindemith's music. *Die Musik* called it "unbearable to the Third Reich." Richard Strauss insisted that a ban be placed on all of it. Prominent musical organizations openly boycotted it. It was because Furtwängler decided to fight for Hindemith, and dared to express his enthusiasm for that composer, that he was temporarily deprived of all his musical posts.

Recommended recording: VM-854 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy).

### *Der Schwanendreher*

*Der Schwanendreher* composed in 1935, is a concerto for viola and orchestra based upon old folk melodies. The title of the work itself is taken from a folk melody used in the last movement, *Seid ihr nicht der Schwanendreher*. The work is in three movements, each of which bears the title of a famous fifteenth or sixteenth century melody. The first movement, *Langsam*, is based upon *Zwischen Berg und tiefem Tal*. The second, in two parts, is based upon two songs: The first (*Sehr ruhig*) is *Nun laube, Lindlein, laube*, and the second (*Langsam*) is *Der Gutzgauch auf dem Zaune sass*. The third movement is a series of five variations on the melody, *Seid ihr nicht der Schwanendreher*.

Hindemith appended the following note to the published score: "A minstrel, joining a merry company, displays what he has brought back from for-

eign lands: songs serious and gay, and finally a dance-piece. Like a true musician, he expands and embellishes the melodies, preluding and improvising according to his fancy and ability. This medieval scene was the inspiration of the composition."

## QUARTET

### *Quartet No. 3*

Hindemith's writing for string quartet is remarkable for its conciseness and compactness. He writes atonally, and often with irregular rhythms. His music is vigorous, mobile, and often acid. One of his best quartets, the Op. 22, was composed in 1922 and was introduced at Donaueschingen in the same year. It is in four movements, opening with an atonal fugato which progresses into the second movement, a sharply accentuated and nervous Scherzo. In the third movement there is a suggestion of placidity. The fourth movement is a fantasia-like movement which contains some remarkable examples of Hindemith's astute contrapuntal writing.

Recommended recording: VM-524 (Coolidge Quartet).

# HOLST

GUSTAV HOLST, b. Cheltenham, England, 1874. Studied at the Royal College of Music in London. For many years he served as teacher at the Royal College of Music, combining this with lecturing, conducting, and composing. In 1924, he retired from all activity except that of composing. He died in London in 1934.

THOUGH Holst was not one of England's major modern composers, his best works have sufficient originality and appeal to win him a place of honor. As Vaughan Williams has pointed out, Holst's weaknesses are "the defects of his qualities. Occasionally, his magnificent technique masters him and the end gets lost in the means. Sometimes he spoils the noble simplicity of his work by an unnecessary piece of elaboration; at other times the very individuality of his thought which requires such a personal technique causes a flaw in his work; . . . the *mot juste* fails him for the moment and he falls back on the common stock of musical device. But the very fact that these lapses are noticeable only goes to show how individual the music is. As time goes on these discrepancies get fewer and fewer, and his style gets maturer, simpler, and more individual, and this individuality shows through all his music; whether it is in the most extreme harmonic and rhythmical thought of the *Planets* or the absolute simplicity of the *Four Carols*, his signature is plain on every page."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

*The Planets*

Holst's masterpiece, *The Planets* (Op. 32), was given its first performance privately in 1918. It was first publicly performed on February 27, 1919, by the Royal Philharmonic Society. It has seven sections: I. "Mars: Bringer of War" is of a barbaric ferocity; II. "Venus: Bringer of Peace" is idyllic in character, the atmosphere set by the opening subject for solo horn; III. "Mercury: Winged Messenger" is a brilliant translation into music of aerial locomotion; IV. "Jupiter: Bringer of Jollity" is vivacious and sprightly; V. "Saturn: Bringer of Old Age" is serene; "Uranus: the Magician" rises to a climax of great majesty; VII. "Neptune: the Mystic" is deeply poetic, the movement coming to a close with offstage female voices.

"The different sections of *The Planets*," wrote Ernest Walker, "strike very different moods and not with equal conviction, but all through there is an almost defiant refusal of any compromise, any shading of the outline of his thoughts."

Recommended recording: VM-929 (B.B.C. Symphony—Boult).

*St. Paul Suite*

Holst composed the *St. Paul Suite* in 1913 for the string orchestra of the St. Paul's School for Girls of whose music department he was the head. Its simplicity, directness of speech, and lucidity stem, no doubt, from the fact that the composer was writing for a school orchestra of non-professionals. It is one of Holst's most charming works, particularly significant for its tasteful use of folk-music material. It is in four movements: I. Jig; II. Ostinato; III. Intermezzo; IV. Finale. The finale comprises two well-known English folk songs, "The Dargason," and "Greensleeves."

Recommended recording: C-17113-4 (Jacques String Orchestra—Jacques).

# HONEGGER

ARTUR HONEGGER, b. Le Havre, France, 1892. Studied at the Zurich Conservatory, and with d'Indy and Gédalge at the Paris Conservatory. He early associated himself with that school of modern French music known as the "French Six" (see Satie), and under its influence composed his first major works.

OF Honegger's music, Henri Prunières wrote as follows: "In him . . . the best qualities of French and German schools meet and blend. His music, which is wholly atonal, is based entirely on counterpoint. Simple melodies, with natural inflections, develop one from another. Each instrument in his

chamber music, and each group of instruments in his orchestral scores, seems to have its individual life and speak its own language. There sometimes result dissonances that are rather painful, a harshness that is cruel. . . . One does not feel in this music . . . any *a priori* system or arbitrary technique. The only reproach against it is that it verges sometimes on scholastic pedantry."

To understand Honegger's music more intelligently, it is necessary to recall his esthetic credo: "I attach great importance to musical architecture, which I should never want to see sacrificed for reasons of a literary or pictorial order. My model is Bach. . . . I do not seek, as do certain anti-Impressionists, the return to harmonic simplicity. I find on the contrary that we should use the harmonic materials created by the school which preceded us, but in a different way—as the base of lines and rhythms."

## ORATORIO

### *Le Roi David*

Honegger's Biblical oratorio is his *chef d'œuvre*. It was composed in 1921, and was instantaneously successful. The work is divided into three sections tracing the growth of David from his humble station as a shepherd to captain, king, and finally prophet. The work contains twenty-eight sections, of which the most striking and powerful are the "*Incantation*" (where the recitative is accompanied by percussion), the "*Lamentations de Guilboa*," the "*Danse devant l'arche*," and the poignant "*Mort de David*." In this work, Honegger's contrapuntal talent is revealed to best advantage and used with singular power and eloquence. This is no neo-classic music, but music in Honegger's most striking modern vein, frequently achieving great brutal strength by virtue of dissonances and the predominating use of wind instruments.

Recommended recordings: No. 5, "*Le Cortège*"; No. 8, Psalm, "*Ah, si j'avais des ailes*"; No. 23, "*Marche des Hébreux*"; No. 24, Psalm, "*Je t'aimerai, Seigneur*"; No. 26, Psalm, "*Loué soit le Seigneur*"; C-8865 (Swiss Romand Chorus and Orchestra—Ansermet).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Pacific 231*

To the score of his orchestral work *Pacific 231*, Honegger appended the following explanation: "I have always had a passionate liking for locomotives; for me they are living things and I love them as others love women or horses. What I have endeavored to portray in *Pacific* is not an imitation of the noises of the locomotive, but the translation into music of the visual impression made by it and the physical sensation of it. It sets forth the objective contemplation: the quiet breathing of the machine in repose, its effort in starting, then the gradual increase in speed, leading from the lyric to the condition of a strain of three hundred tons hurling itself through the night at a speed

of one hundred miles an hour. As subject, I have chosen the type of locomotive 'Pacific No. 231' for heavy trains capable of great speed."

Recommended recording: V-9276 (Paris Symphony—Honegger).

# HUMPERDINCK

ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK, b. Siegburg, Germany, 1854. A pupil of Hiller, Gernsheim, and Jensen at the Cologne Conservatory, and of Rheinberger at the Munich Royal School of Music. In 1879 he won the Mendelssohn Prize enabling him to tour Italy. There he met Wagner, who invited him to come to Bayreuth as rehearser and stage manager. In 1885, he became professor at the Barcelona Conservatory, and in 1890 professor at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt. In 1900 he was appointed director of the Akademische Schule in Berlin. He died in Berlin in 1921.

OF the many operas composed by Humperdinck, only one has survived, the charming *Hänsel und Gretel*, though music from *Die Königskinder* is sometimes played. Yet his influence on German composers was great, particularly in arousing interest in German folk-music forms. "The example set by Humperdinck's treatment of the orchestra—combination of simple song-melody with an appearance of artistic polyphony and harmonic logic—proved handy for German composers of household music," wrote Paul Bekker, "and was exploited in a rich practical literature of genre pieces, idylls, and comic or light operas in small forms."

## OPERA

### *Hänsel und Gretel*

In three tableaux, libretto by Adelheid Wette, first produced at the Weimar Opera on December 23, 1893.

Originally, Humperdinck planned *Hänsel und Gretel* as a little entertainment piece for his nephews and nieces. While he was working on this project, it occurred to him that the subject might serve for an appealing opera, and he expanded his original ideas. The first performance of his opera was phenomenally successful, so much so that a formerly obscure and unknown composer became famous throughout Germany. Nor was the success of *Hänsel* confined to Germany alone. It was performed in most of the leading European opera houses to appreciative audiences.

Humperdinck's admiration of Wagner is evident in this score. As H. E. Krehbiel pointed out: "Humperdinck built up his musical structure . . . in the Wagnerian manner." But it is not an imitative work by any means; it has a style and a charm of its own. "The little work is replete with melodies nearly all of which derive their physiognomy from two little songs which the

children sing at the beginning of the first and second acts, and which are frankly borrowed from the folk-song literature of Germany. These ditties however . . . contribute characteristic themes out of which the orchestral part is constructed."

The opera is, of course, based upon the famous fairy-tale of Grimm. Hänsel and Gretel, going to the woods to pick berries, lose their way in a forest that is inhabited by a witch who eats children. At night, they say their prayers and go to sleep, protected by guardian angels. The following morning they are caught by the witch, who proposes to roast them in her great oven. They succeed, however, in forcing the witch herself into the oven—and her death releases all the other children whom she has captured.

When *Hänsel und Gretel* was introduced at Weimar, the conductor of the evening was Richard Strauss, whose opinion of it was expressed in a letter to Humperdinck as follows: "I want to tell you how enchanted I am by your opera. What refreshing humor, what preciously naïve melodies, what art and subtlety in the orchestral treatment, what perfection in the shaping of the whole work, what flowering invention, what marvelous polyphony, all so original and new, and yet so genuinely German!"

*Hänsel und Gretel* was the first opera to be broadcast in its entirety over a nationwide network in the United States. This took place on December 25, 1931, from the stage of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City.

The best-known sections of the opera include the dance-duet, "*Brüderchen, komm tanz mit mir*," from Act I; the Sandman's Song, the "Evening Prayer," and the Dance Pantomime from Act II; the Witch's Song and Gingerbread Waltz, from Act III.

Recommended recording: suite, CM-424 (C.B.S. Symphony—Barlow.)

## IBERT

JACQUES IBERT, b. Paris, 1890. Studied at the Paris Conservatory where he was a friend of Honegger and Milhaud, who influenced him. During the First World War, he served in the French Navy. Afterward, he returned to his studies, winning the Prix de Rome. In Rome he composed his first important work, a symphonic poem, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, based on Oscar Wilde's poem. In 1940, he served as director of the French Academy in Rome, the first musician ever to hold this post.

OF Ibert's compositorial style, André George wrote: "In whatever Jacques Ibert presents to his hearers, there is clarity and good quality, an impression of work well done. . . . There is always about music, as about his person, an air of good fellowship that shows the artist of breeding. He pleases with-

out trifling. Generously gifted as he is in many directions, his musical temperament expands with singular felicity in the orchestra where he revels in the subtlest management of exquisite sound values. . . . His music is always found to reflect his apt sense of color and his gift for contriving these iridescent effects which are so striking a feature of his work."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Les Escales*

Ibert composed these three "orchestral pictures" in 1922. Some time after winning the Prix de Rome, he had occasion to travel by boat in the Mediterranean, and his impressions of three Mediterranean harbors inspired this composition. The first picture is entitled "Rome—Palermo," in which a nocturne, played by flute and trumpet, describes the gentle play of the waves in the sea as day breaks. The second picture, "Tunis—Nefta," is a portrait of the North African port. An oboe chants a melancholy melody. In the last picture, "Valencia," we have a brilliant Spanish dance rich in color and abounding in energy.

Recommended recording: CM-X16 (Straram Orchestra—Straram).

# d'INDY

VINCENT d'INDY, b. Paris, 1851. After studying with Lavignac, he started playing in the Châtelet Orchestra conducted by Colonne. In 1872, he became a pupil of César Franck, whose influence on the younger man was far-reaching. Three years later, a symphony, *Jean Hunyade*, introduced him to musical Paris. Shortly after this, he and Franck founded the Société Nationale de Musique, whose mission was to encourage modern composers through performances of their works; after Franck's death, d'Indy became president of the society. He helped to bring about a reorganization of the Paris Conservatory, and for many years was one of its most honored professors. He died in Paris in 1931.

To understand d'Indy's music it is essential to remember that he was a pupil and disciple of César Franck. From Franck he acquired not only his consummate technique, but also certain qualities of his compositorial style: clarity of writing, emotional warmth, a beautiful flow of lyricism, high-minded sincerity. Like Franck, d'Indy was motivated in his composition primarily by the need to create beauty. "Only the heart can engender beauty," he used to say; and d'Indy wrote his best works from the heart.

Romain Rolland points out that one of the outstanding qualities of d'Indy's music is its clarity. "There are no shadows in him. His thought and his art

are as clear as his look. . . . There are in his music the qualities of a general: the knowledge of the end, the patient will to attain it, the perfect acquaintance with the means, the spirit of order, and the mastery over his work and over himself. Despite the variety of the material he employs, the whole is always clear."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Istar Variations*

Istar, heroine of the Babylonian poem *The Epic of Izdubar*, approaches the threshold of death, seeking her lover. There are seven gates through which she must pass. At the first gate, the warden removes her tiara; at the second, her earrings; at the third, her necklace; at the fourth, the jewels on her breast; at the fifth, her girdle; at the sixth, her rings; and at the seventh, her last veil. Standing now in all her magnificent nudity, she is at last permitted to drink of the waters of life and thereby to save her lover.

In his symphonic variations *Istar* (Op. 42), d'Indy follows the above program closely, with extraordinary skill, making each variation suggest a successive stage of the disrobing. An interesting feature of the work is that the theme upon which the variations are built is not played through at the beginning—as is commonly done in theme-and-variations music; instead, only the germ is suggested in the beginning. The theme, however, grows and develops with the utmost subtlety throughout the entire set of variations, and appears in its entirety—performed in unisons and octaves—at the end of the work to suggest Istar's nudity.

"The composition," wrote William F. Apthorp, "is so free as to resent technical analysis; but by following the poem, and noting the garment or ornament taken off, the listener can appreciate the composer's poetic or picturesque suggestiveness in his music."

Recommended recording: VSP-16 (San Francisco Symphony—Monteux).

### *Summer Day on the Mountain*

This rhapsody for piano and orchestra (Op. 61), which d'Indy composed in 1905, ranks with the *Istar Variations* as a masterpiece. This is impressionistic music, touched with the most delicate colors, feelings, senses, suggestions. It was inspired by a prose poem by Roger de Pampelonne—a poem to Nature rich with poetic feeling. This music could have been composed only by a man profoundly in love with Nature. The work is in three movements. The first, entitled "Dawn," is a sensitive portrait of the awakening of the day on the mountains: the sun streaks through the clouds and gently awakens Nature. The second movement, "Day," is an idyllic picture of Nature as seen through the eyes of a poet reposing under the shade of pines. The third movement, "Night," is gentle and pastoral in character, portraying



the decline of day, the approach of dusk, with the countryside finally enveloped by the pervading darkness.

## SYMPHONY

### *Symphony on a French Mountain Air*

This symphony (Op. 25), which d'Indy composed when he was thirty-six years old, was inspired by a mountain air that he heard during one of his trips through the French Alps. The song is heard at once at the opening of the symphony (Allegro), chanted by the English horn. A vigorous section follows in which the melody is developed and in which a second theme (for flute and harps) offers a measure of contrast in its agitation and restlessness. At the close of the movement, the mountain air returns touched with an atmosphere of mystery. The second movement (Andante) consists of a beautiful melody, first introduced by the piano, then taken up by the flute and the violins. Occasionally, through the movement, we hear a reminder of the mountain song. In the Finale, the piano recalls the song again, developed now with brilliance and power.

# IPPOLITOV-IVANOV

MICHAEL IPPOLITOV-IVANOV, b. Gatchina, Russia, 1859. Studied at the St. Petersburg Conservatory from 1876 to 1882, following which he became director of the Music School at Tiflis, as well as conductor of the city orchestra. In 1893, he was appointed professor at the Moscow Conservatory, and in 1899, conductor of the Moscow Private Opera. After the Russian Revolution, Ippolitov-Ivanov identified himself closely with the life of the new state, was elected president of the Union of Soviet Composers, and wrote many works dedicated to the new regime. He died in Moscow in 1935.

IPPOLITOV-IVANOV is by no means a major figure in Russian music. As Sabaneyev pointed out, he had a "very simple and in the highest degree a naïve talent, clear and childishly pure." He was lyrical, unsophisticated, and pleasant to hear. He composed with fertility in practically every branch of musical composition; only one of his works, however, keeps his name alive—the *Caucasian Sketches*.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Caucasian Sketches*

During a stay in Tiflis, Ippolitov-Ivanov studied the music of the Caucasian peoples, especially that of the Georgians. He spent more than a decade

in the Caucasus, delving into the mysteries of Eastern music, and transcribing the strange, exotic melodies. It was this experience that inspired him to write his masterpiece, *Caucasian Sketches*, Op. 10. He modeled his melodies after authentic Caucasian folk music, but he brought to them his pure lyricism, his ingenuousness, and his personal charm. The work has, therefore, nothing of the exotic about it, except in superficial colors and qualities. It is lyrical and intriguing throughout, its appeal so much on the surface that it has remained a great favorite of salon music. It is in four movements: I. "In the Pass," Allegro moderato; II. "In the Village," Larghetto; III. "In the Mosque," Adagietto; IV. "The March of the Sardar," Allegro moderato.

Recommended recording: VM-797 (Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler).

## IVES

CHARLES IVES, b. Danbury, Connecticut, 1874. Studied music with Dudley Buck, Harry Rowe Shelley, and (at Yale University) Horatio Parker. For many years he combined a career as insurance man with that of composing. Ill-health in 1930 compelled him to abandon both insurance and creative work.

SMALL-TOWN music was the greatest single influence in Ives's life, and was largely responsible for his radical innovations. Small-town bands rarely play in tune or together. Ives assimilated this strange conglomeration of discordant sounds and made it a part of his own compositorial style. He realized that these small-town performances have common characteristics throughout America. Thus, when he attempted to give musical expression to the American village and hamlet, he built up a radical and complex musical system which included these amazing unmusical characteristics. His music is audacious in its harmony, rhythm, and atonality. "I found," he has said, "I could not go on using the familiar chords only. I heard something else." He is, as Henry Cowell wrote, "a wizard at taking seeming irreconcilable elements, and weaving them together into a unity of purpose and flow, joining them by a feeling of cohesion, as well as through the logic of his system . . . which is wide enough to bring together elements of many different sorts."

## PIANO MUSIC

### *Sonata No. 2 ("Concord")*

This is accepted by most critics as Ives's greatest work. Composed for the piano between 1911 and 1915 it is, in the description of the composer, "an

attempt to present [one person's] impression of the spirit of the literature, the philosophy, and the men of Concord, Mass., of over half a century ago." The sonata is in four movements. The first, entitled "Emerson," is an attempt to reproduce in music a critical evaluation of the prose and poetry of the great writer. The second movement, "Hawthorne," is a vivacious scherzo. In the third movement, "The Alcotts," Ives evokes the gentle and pastoral spirit of the Concord village, the old Alcott house under the elms, the spinet on which "Beth" used to play Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (in this movement Ives embellishes on the opening theme of the Fifth). The fourth movement is "Thoreau," which—once again in the composer's words—is an attempt to follow Thoreau's thoughts "on an autumn day of Indian summer at Walden."

When the Sonata was introduced in 1939 by the pianist John Kirkpatrick, Lawrence Gilman wrote of it as follows: "This sonata is exceptionally great music—it is, indeed, the greatest music composed by an American in impulse and implication. It is wide-ranging and capacious. It has passion, tenderness, humor, simplicity, homeliness. It has imaginative and spiritual vastness. It has wisdom and beauty, and profundity, and a sense of the encompassing terror and splendor of human life and human destiny—a sense of those mysteries that are both human and divine."

## JANÁČEK

LEÓŠ JANÁČEK, b. Hukvaldy, Moravia, 1854. Studied at the College of Organ-playing in Prague. After 1878, became the most active musical force in Moravia, conducting popular concerts, founding and directing first the organ department at the Teachers' School in Brünn, then the Conservatory at Brünn, and collecting and arranging the folk music of Moravia. He died in Ostrau in Moravia in 1928.

OF Janáček's works, only the opera *Jenufa* is still remembered. Until 1939, it was heard in many of Europe's opera houses. His music has a savage intensity and a barbaric strength. He evolved his own musical language based on Moravian peasant music. In an article which he published late in life he explained his theories on "melodies of the language," showing how differently speech melody and rhythm develop among different people, in different conditions of life, and in different movements of the mind and body. He thus concluded that musical expression must be founded upon these positive melodic and rhythmic elements of talking; and this expression dominates his compositorial style. His musical language, as Rosa Newmarch pointed out, "is never stereotyped. Its strong personal note is always varied by methods and nuances appropriate to the subject at hand."

## OPERA

*Jenufa*

In three acts, book by the composer, introduced at the Brünn Opera in 1904.

In 1875, Janáček traveled throughout the south of Moravia, and it was then and there that he first began sketching *Jenufa*, built around Moravian peasant life. The opera, however, was not completed until twenty-seven years later. After its first performance in Brünn, it waited until 1916 to be introduced in Prague, and until 1918 in Vienna, but it scored a decided success in both cities and established Janáček's reputation throughout Europe. It was performed at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1924.

*Jenufa* is based on a play of Gabriela Preissora. *Jenufa* is loved by two young men, stepbrothers. She has a child by one of them, but the other is still willing to marry her. The baby's foster mother decides that this illegitimate child is a hindrance, so she gives *Jenufa* a sleeping potion and (when *Jenufa* is asleep) takes the baby to the frozen river and submerges it under the ice. After the woman is brought to justice, *Jenufa* is able to marry the second stepbrother.

The style of Janáček in this opera was admirably analyzed by Vaclav Stepan: "Janáček rejects all intellectual elements. . . . He uses no polyphony, no thematic construction and development. He is convinced that the melodic and rhythmic lines of the living language, with its emotion and all the moods of the person speaking, are the most effective dramatic factors. Janáček has never ceased collecting the 'melodies of language,' and is exclusively inspired by them both melodically and rhythmically. His passion and dramatic touch, penetrating and concise, achieve amazing effects, especially when the milieu of the drama is close to him."

## JOSQUIN DES PRÉS

JOSQUIN DES PRÉS, b. Hainault (Burgundy), in or about 1445. He is believed to have been a pupil of Okeghem. In his twenty-fifth year he went to Milan, where he was employed at the court of Galeazzo Maria Sforza, following which he was engaged for the Papal choir. By 1490 he had left Italy to join the chapel of Louis XII in France. He died in Condé-sur-Escaut in 1521.

JOSQUIN DES PRÉS was the most important composer produced by the Netherland school of contrapuntal music, and was recognized by his contemporaries as the most important composer of his time. The Netherland school was founded through the influence of the works of Guillaume Dufay (1400–

1474) and included such composers as Arcadelt, Binchois, Busnois, Okeghem, Obrecht, and Orlando de Lasso, besides Josquin des Prés. In the choral music they produced, this school introduced an original note, thus setting the stage for the greatest of contrapuntal geniuses before Bach—Palestrina. Commenting on the contribution of the Netherland school, Emil Naumann wrote: "Almost at the beginning of the Netherland school, mechanical invention was made subservient to the idea. It was no longer contrapuntal writing for counterpoint's sake. Excesses were toned down, and the unquestionable desire was that the contrapuntist's art should occupy its proper position as a means to an end. Euphony and beauty of expression were the composer's objects."

## CHORAL MUSIC

Josquin des Prés's works include numerous Masses, Motets, French chansons, and other choral pieces. Since no one of these is heard more often than the others, it is feasible to discuss his music collectively. If we understand the nature and style of his music in general we can appreciate and comprehend any one of his works.

Ambros, famous musicographer of the nineteenth century, calls Josquin des Prés the first genius in musical history. "There speaks in [his] music a warm sensitiveness, a capacity for urgent emotions, a mystic awe of worship. His Masses are noble with the nobility of the heart's depth. . . . In his other works, the abstract, elevated style of the earlier composers is broken up as by a prism into a glowing play of many colors. Here are sadness, pain, and bitter revolt; and here are intimate love, tender sympathy, and playful jest. It is an unprecedented stride forward which occurs with Josquin; in him there is 'lived through' an art development such as is found in no earlier artist."

Julien Tiersot points out that it was Josquin who brought contrapuntal music to its first important stage of artistic development. With him, the interweaving of the counterpoint became more subtle and intricate. Modulation was suggested. Accidentals were used more freely. Imitation and canon acquired greater flexibility. Fétis notes that Josquin was the first to write regularly in more than two parts, thus making him virtually the inventor of the developed art of the canon.

Recommended recording: "*Ave coelorum Domina*," (from *Ave Maria*) and "*Ave verum corpus natum*," V-11677 (Dijon Cathedral Choir—Samson); "*Kyrie*" (from *Missa Hercules*) and "*Stabat Mater*" Anthologie Sonore 73 (Les Paraphonistes de St.-Jean-des-Matines).

# KALINNIKOV

VASSILY KALINNIKOV, b. Voima, Russia, 1866. Studied at the Moscow Philharmonic Society. In 1893 he received his first important musical post, as second conductor of Italian Opera in Moscow. Discovering a tubercular condition of the lungs, he resigned his conductorial post in 1894 and settled in southern Russia. His First Symphony, introduced in Kiev in 1897, showed him to be a major creative talent, but he did not live long enough to fulfill all the promise of this work. He died in Yalta in 1901.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *First Symphony*

THIS highly melodious and beautifully written symphony has acquired a place of importance in the symphonic repertory and has succeeded in keeping Kalinnikov's name alive. Following its first performance in Kiev, it was introduced in Vienna, Paris, and London with great success. In four movements, it is suffused with national coloring. The first movement, *Allegro moderato*, contains two striking melodic subjects, the first played by the strings, and the second, by the flute and clarinet. In the second movement, *Andante commodamente*, we have a beautiful lyric page, in which the principal theme is sung by the English horn and the violas. The *Scherzo* is of a peasant vigor, and the *Finale* comes as a summation of the entire symphony by quoting the themes from all preceding movements.

Recommended recording: VM-827 (Indianapolis Symphony—Sevitzky).

# KODÁLY

ZOLTÁN KODÁLY, b. Kecskemet, Hungary, 1882. Studied with Koessler at the Budapest Conservatory. At first his music betrayed the influences of Brahms and Debussy; but intimate association with Hungarian folk music (which, with Bartók, he helped to collect and edit) brought individuality to his own manner of writing. In 1906 he was appointed professor of composition at the Budapest Conservatory. He has since then been active as composer, teacher, and writer on music.

KODÁLY is frequently accepted as one of the leading living Hungarian composers. Like Bartók, Kodály has been influenced by Hungarian folk music, and for this reason their styles are somewhat alike. "Such stylistic similarities as do undoubtedly exist," wrote Cecil Gray, "are not the result of the influence of either composer upon the other, but simply the outcome of wholly impersonal and extraneous influences to which both have been

equally subject. Their respective talents have been nurtured by identically the same conditions . . . and have reacted to precisely the same artistic stimuli, particularly that afforded by the distinctive idiomatic peculiarities of Hungarian folk music. . . . Although both speak the same language to a certain extent, they express a totally different order of emotions."

Béla Bartók himself has admirably summed up the qualities of Kodály's best works: "A strong, broad-flowing melodic construction, and a certain leaning towards hesitating disintegration and melancholy. The expression of reckless revelry and wild intoxication is foreign to his individuality, which is of a predominantly contemplative nature. . . . Kodály's music . . . is not 'modern' in the current sense of the word. It has nothing in common with atonal, bitonal, or polytonal tendencies: everything remains based upon the principles of balanced tonalities. Yet his musical language is entirely new and expresses musical ideas never heard before, thus proving that tonality is not yet completely exhausted."

## CHORAL MUSIC

### *Psalmus Hungaricus*

In 1923, Kodály composed *Psalmus Hungaricus*, Op. 13, for solo, chorus, and orchestra on commission from the city of Budapest to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the union of Buda and Pest. It was given its first performance in Budapest on November 19, 1923.

A. von Toth wrote as follows: "The words of the *Psalmus* date from the sixteenth century, and the work manifests Kodály's attitude toward ancient Hungarian culture with unmistakable clearness. Archaic propensities are as foreign to Kodály's forceful, modern mind as an attempt to conjure the pale ghosts of a far-removed past. . . . Kodály's music embodies not only the highly original and individual manifestations of a modern mind; it is also the realization of century-old dreams. . . . His musical setting exhausts both the national and subjective elements of the poem, and moulds them into one perfect and homogeneous unit of great visionary beauty and of great lyric and dramatic strength."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Háry János Suite*

Kodály composed an opera, *Háry János*, which was produced in Budapest on October 16, 1926, and has since been accepted as one of the major contributions to Hungarian opera. Kodály's opera is based upon a character famous in Hungarian folk lore, Háry János, teller of remarkable and not always credible tales. From his opera, Kodály then drew several representative sections and incorporated them in an orchestral suite which has become one of his most famous works.

The suite is divided into six movements. The first is a prelude entitled "The Fairy Tale Begins." The opening chord represents a sneeze, for there is a superstition in Hungary that any story preceded by a sneeze must be true. Elaborate and incredible, indeed, is the tale that Háy János (or "John Háy") has to tell his listeners, and it is beautifully developed by the full orchestra. In the second movement, "Viennese Musical Clock," Háy stands in wondering contemplation of the rotating musical clock on the Imperial Palace in Vienna. In the third movement, "Song," Háy and his beloved Orze think nostalgically of their native village. The fourth movement, "The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon," is martial in character, describing Háy's combat with Napoleon. The fifth movement is an "Intermezzo," rich with Hungarian colors and passions; and in the last movement, "Entrance of the Emperor and his Court," Háy describes the magnificence of court life in imperial Vienna.

Recommended recording: VM-197 (Minneapolis Symphony—Ormandy).

## KREISLER

FRITZ KREISLER, b. Vienna, 1875. Studied the violin first at the Vienna Conservatory (with Hellmesberger), then at the Paris Conservatory (with Massart), winning the Grand Prix at the latter institution. After a period of comparatively unsuccessful concertizing, he temporarily abandoned music, first to study medicine, then to enter the Austrian army. He made his return début as violinist in 1899, and since that time has been accepted as one of the world's greatest violinists. His American début took place in 1888 as a child prodigy, but after 1900 he visited this country regularly and has become one of our best-loved artists on the concert stage.

### VIOLIN MUSIC

THOUGH Kreisler has composed a charming violin concerto (in imitation of Vivaldi) and a string quartet, he is best known for his smaller pieces for the violin, which have immeasurably enriched the violin repertory and as encore numbers have become favorites with concert artists and audiences. These works include gems like *Caprice Viennois*, *La Gitana*, *Liebesfreud*, *Liebesleid*, *The Old Refrain*, *Praeludium and Allegro*, *Rondino*, *Schön Rosmarin*, *Sicilienne et Rigaudon*, and *Tambourin chinois*. These pieces require no analysis to be understood at first hearing. Their charm lies on the surface. They are all melodious, pervaded with some of the enchantment of old Vienna, suffused with old Vienna's spirit of *Gemütlichkeit*. They are graceful, poignant, full of zest and the joy of living—Viennese to the core.



It is now history how for more than three decades Kreisler brought out these brilliant little pieces not as original works, but as transcriptions of works by such masters as Vivaldi, Martini, Couperin, Pugnani, and Francœur. During all that time the hoax went undetected; the world accepted his statement that he had stumbled on the original manuscripts in European libraries and monasteries and had adapted them for the violin. Actually, Kreisler started this practice, and continued it, because he was young and unknown and wanted to obtain greater circulation for his own music. He kept his secret successfully for many years, during which all published copies of these works bore the line "Transcribed by Fritz Kreisler."

An attempt by Olin Downes to trace the origin of an alleged *Praeludium and Allegro* by Pugnani eventually (in 1935) brought to light the fact that all of Kreisler's transcriptions actually were his own works masquerading under the identity of famous masters—and an explosion was set off in the music world. "We wish," wrote Ernest Newman, "to apply the term discreditable to the whole transaction from start to finish. . . . It is as though Mr. Yeats published poems under the name of Herrick or Spenser." Other outraged criticisms were published in America, condemning Kreisler for his unethical fraud. In time, the entire scandal was forgotten, without diminishing Kreisler's stature as an artist or decreasing his phenomenal popularity with his public.

However much one may condemn Kreisler for his questionable ethics in pulling the wool over the eyes of the music world, one cannot deny that he perpetrated his "fraud" cleverly. Certainly, he had mimicked the style of the old masters with such authenticity that, for three decades, few critics or musicologists were made suspicious. Certainly, too, in imitating these masters, he proved himself capable of writing music freshly and charmingly, music which has acquired a permanent status in the violin music of our generation.

Recommended recordings: orchestral transcriptions of *Caprice Viennois*, *Liebesfreud*, *Liebesleid*, *Schön Rosmarin*, *Tambourin chinois*, VM-211 (Minneapolis Symphony—Ormandy); *Caprice Viennois*, V-14690 (Kreisler); *Liebesfreud*, V-6608 (Kreisler); *Liebesleid*, V-6608 (Kreisler); *The Old Refrain*, V-1465 (Kreisler); *Praeludium and Allegro*, V-1863 (Menuhin); *Rondino*, V-1386 (Kreisler); *Schön Rosmarin*, V-1386 (Kreisler); *Tambourin chinois*, V-6844 (Kreisler).

# KŘENEK

ERNST KŘENEK, b. Vienna, 1900. Studied with Franz Schreker. For a period he served as chorus-master of the Royal Theater in Kassel. During a period of travel, he wrote his first opera, *Der Sprung über den Schatten*, performed in Frankfurt in 1924. After becoming conductor of the Prussian State Theater in Kassel, he wrote the opera that made his name famous throughout the world of music, *Jonny spielt auf!*. After the rise of the Nazis, Křenek abandoned Germany, finally settling in the United States where he became a member of the music faculty of Vassar College and, since 1942, dean of the School of Fine Arts at Hamline University, St. Paul, Minn.

KŘENEK has undergone several radical changes in his musical style. In his first works, he was strongly influenced by the romanticism of Franz Schreker. In the early twenties, he was intrigued by the jazz idiom, and abandoned his romantic vein for jazz-writing. In or about 1928, he returned to romanticism—this time the romanticism of Schubert. His last metamorphosis as a creative artist has been from romanticism to the twelve-tone technique of Arnold Schönberg. "If I were to venture an explanation," wrote Křenek himself, in regard to his varied changes of style, "I should say that I have been striving for an ever freer and more incisive articulation of musical thought."

## OPERA

### *Jonny spielt auf!*

In two parts, book by the composer, introduced at the Leipzig Opera on February 11, 1927.

*Jonny spielt auf!* (Op. 45) was rejected by several major German opera houses before being accepted by the Leipzig Opera. But when eventually introduced it scored a sensation. It was performed in leading opera houses of more than a hundred European cities, was translated into eighteen languages, and became one of the most publicized operas of modern times. It was introduced at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1929.

The book concerns a Negro jazz-band leader named Jonny who, after stealing Daniello's violin, conquers all those near him and about him with his fiddling. We finally see him atop the globe, playing his violin, while below him his public dances corybantically to his music.

The opera's impact lies in its juxtaposition of the pulsing pragmatism of our time with the outworn romanticism of the 19th century. Surely, in the light of the ideas clashing in the world today, this is an important subject. And it is particularly important if one of the functions of art is conceived to be the interpretation of the "buzzing, blooming confusion" that is the world.

There is a strong vein of vulgarity throughout the whole score, though some highly pleasing melodies were written by Křenek for Max, the romantic composer. There can be little doubt of the opera's dramatic effectiveness,

liveliness, and zest though its esthetic importance is highly questionable. Its cheap striving after effect, its blatant use of shock, its disconcerting clichés, its music-hall atmosphere will inevitably doom it, if they have not done so already. Actually, *Jonny* is interesting as a commentary on a period now gone—the jazz-mad era of the twenties to which not only America but Europe as well succumbed. It gives that era reflection, rather than interpretation, descending to its level, rather than raising it to a higher one. Its decadent quality, and contrived, rather than felt, exuberance gives the score its artificial character. *Jonny* appears to be good entertainment but little more than that in view of its regrettable attachment to the “here and now.”

It might be added that the jazz-writing in this opera is obviously that of a European. It has a decadent quality, and gives the impression that its abandon and exuberance are conventionally contrived rather than felt, which—in the last analysis—gives the score its rather artificial character.

Recommended recordings: Orchestral selections, Decca 25785 (Dajos Bela Orchestra); “*Leb wohl, mein Schatz*,” and “*Nun ist die Geige mein*,” Decca 25003 (Hoffmann).

## KUHNNAU

JOHANN KUHNNAU, b. Geising, Bohemia, 1660. He combined the study of law with that of music, following both careers simultaneously. In 1682, he became organist at the Thomasschule in Leipzig, in 1688 founding the Collegium Musicum in that city. He renounced law in 1701 to become cantor of the Thomasschule, devoting himself to composition and to the direction of musical services for the next twenty years. He died in Leipzig in 1722, and was succeeded at the Thomasschule by Johann Sebastian Bach.

KUHNNAU was the father of the piano sonata. It was he who was the first to attempt the writing of a sonata for a keyboard instrument. “Why should one not try to write for the piano in a form which has been utilized for other instruments?” he argued. In 1695 he published a set of piano pieces entitled *Frische Klavier-Früchte*, a volume which for the first time contains examples of piano-sonata writing. “It did not take me long to produce these pieces. . . . While writing [them] I was so eager that, without neglecting my other occupations, I wrote every day, so that this work, which I began on Monday, was completed by the next Monday.” Seven of Kuhnau’s sonatas are found in the *Frische Klavier-Früchte*, and six others were included in a later publication entitled *Musical Representations of Some Bible Stories*.

Kuhnau’s sonatas were usually in three, four, or five movements. As this editor wrote elsewhere: “While the resemblance between a Kuhnau sonata

and one by Joseph Haydn is remote, it is not altogether impossible to trace the seed which was ultimately to produce the full flower. Kuhnau, in his sonatas, frequently demonstrated the use of contrasting moods, often using a slow movement between two fast ones. Occasionally, too, Kuhnau used two themes of a contrasting nature in one movement. Finally, in his sense for form, in the grace with which he developed his musical material, and in the fluidity of his self-expression, he definitely developed the resources of early writing for the piano, and set a pattern which his contemporaries and immediate successors were not slow in accepting."

Romain Rolland found the following traits in Kuhnau's sonatas: "A depth of form, a grace compounded of strength and lucidity which even today would make his name a household word—if society were capable of taking a genuine interest in music without being urged to do so by fashion."

## PIANO MUSIC

### *The Combat between David and Goliath*

Kuhnau's most famous piano sonata is found in his volume *Musical Representations of Some Bible Stories*, and is frequently pointed to as one of the first successful examples of program music. It is in six movements, each assigned an identifying title which gives a clue to the program." I. "The Bravado of Goliath"; II. "The Terror of the Israelites and Their Prayer to God"; III. "David's Courage Before the Terrible Enemy"; IV. "The Dispute and the Slinging of the Stone by David"; V. "The Plight of the Philistines"; VI. "Paeans of Victory by the Israelites."

This sonata is, as Wanda Landowska once remarked, "a marvelous example of early tone painting. But Kuhnau was more than a pioneer composer. He had a lucid sense of form, and in his piano music used an outline that is graceful and elegant. He had a fine fluidity of musical expression and a wonderful resourcefulness in enriching his melodic materials."

Recommended recording: Anthologie Sonore 3 (Bodky).

# LALO

EDOUARD LALO, b. Lille, France, 1823. Studied at the Paris Conservatory, winning the second Prix de Rome. For many years he earned his living teaching music and playing in a string quartet. He first came to prominence in 1874 when his friend Pablo Sarasate introduced Lalo's Violin Concerto in London. Performances of *Symphonie espagnole* (by Sarasate) and of the opera *Le Roi d'Ys* (at the Opéra-Comique) established his reputation permanently. He was appointed Officer of the Legion of Honor in 1890. He died in Paris in 1892.

JULIEN TIERSOT has analyzed Lalo's style as a composer as follows: "The music of Lalo is essentially an aristocratic art. It is a sculpture created with extreme delicacy, outlined without any visible effort, and apparently brought to being with the utmost naturalness. It possesses no romanticism, discloses little restlessness, and its intimate feeling is not very profound. But his forms are of a rare ingenuity. The tonality is clear and endowed with a color that is never excessive but is always bathed in light; it is founded upon a diatonism that is almost constant and hardly ever depends upon the resources of chromaticism. His melodies, generally short, are elegant and fresh. His rhythms are well formed."

## CONCERTO

### *'Cello Concerto in D minor*

Lalo composed his Concerto for 'cello and orchestra in 1876, and it was introduced at the Cirque d'Hiver in Paris on December 9, 1887, the soloist being Adolphe Fischer (to whom the work is dedicated), and Padeloup conducting.

The work is in three movements. The first movement, Prelude, is prefaced by an introduction in which the solo 'cello presents the principal theme. After a short development, the solo 'cellist announces the second theme as well. Both themes are then developed in characteristic sonata-form, undergoing many subtle transformations. The second movement is a poetic Intermezzo. The solo 'cello once again introduces the two principal themes of the movement before they are taken up by the orchestra and developed by both orchestra and solo instrument. The first theme is slow and tender, while the second is more vigorous. The finale is a rondo, brilliant and magnetic, giving the soloist full opportunity to reveal his virtuosity.

Recommended recording: CM-185 (Maréchal; Symphony Orchestra—Gaubert).

## OPERA

### *Le Roi d'Ys*

In three acts, libretto by Edouard Blau, first performed at the Opéra-Comique in Paris, on May 7, 1888.

"Two years ago," Lalo wrote in 1888, "I destroyed the first score of *Le Roi d'Ys*. I had wanted to make it a lyrical drama in the modern meaning of the term; but after some months of reflection I gave up the idea, discouraged by a task that seemed much too heavy for my strength. Until now, only the colossus Wagner, the inventor of the real lyrical drama, has been strong enough to carry such a weight; all who have tried to walk in his footsteps have failed, some pitifully, some honorably. . . . In order to fight successfully on Wagner's ground it will be necessary to surpass him; and the fighter capable of doing this has not yet appeared. As for myself, I realized my impotence in time, and so have written a simple opera."

The "simple opera" is based on a well-known Breton legend. The King of Ys, a city on the coast of Brittany, has two daughters, Rozenn and Margared, both in love with Mylio. He loves Rozenn; but her sister Margared, who is determined to win Mylio for herself, refuses to accept the situation. The King meanwhile arranges to have Margared marry the Prince Karnac, and she rebels. Offended, the Prince challenges Mylio to a duel and is defeated. With Margared, he plans vengeance. She reveals to him how he can put the entire city at his mercy by opening the seagates that protect it from the Atlantic. During the wedding festivities of Mylio and Rozenn, the seagates are opened, the city is flooded, and the populace escapes to a hill nearby. Margared confesses her share in the crime and commits suicide by throwing herself into the rushing waters. The patron saint of Ys, moved by her self-sacrifice, appears in a vision and saves the city and its people from destruction.

The opera was extraordinarily successful at its first performance. One critic described it as "noble, strong, puissant, not free from faults but evidently the work of a highly talented artist." It has become one of the most notable works in the French operatic repertory. "*Le Roi d'Ys*," in the analysis of R. A. Streatfeild, "is an excellent specimen of the kind of opera which French composers of the second rank used to write before the sun of Wagner dawned upon their horizon. It is redolent of Meyerbeer and Gounod, and though some of the scenes are not without vigor, it is impossible to avoid the feeling that in *Le Roi d'Ys* Lalo was forcing a graceful and delicate talent into an uncongenial groove. He is at his best in the lighter parts of the work, such as the pretty scene of Rozenn's wedding, which is perfectly charming."

One of the most celebrated passages of the opera is the overture, which is often heard at symphony concerts. The overture presents, in cameo form, the plot of the entire opera and quotes some of the more important musical episodes from the opera, including the aria sung by Mylio, "*Si le ciel est plein de flammes*," Margared's invocation, "*Lorsque je t'ai vu soudain repaître*," and Rozenn's aria, "*En silence pourquoi souffrir?*" Equally famous is the Aubade of Act III, "*Vainement, ma bien aimée*."

Recommended recordings: Overture, V-118489 (San Francisco Symphony—Monteux).

## VIOLIN MUSIC

*Symphonie espagnole*

Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole* for violin and orchestra, Op. 21, is, of course, not a symphony, and in at least one of its movements it is not even Spanish. But it is a highly melodious work, picturesquely atmospheric, gratifyingly featuring the virtuosity of the soloist. It was written for, and dedicated to, the famous Spanish virtuoso, Pablo Sarasate. In 1874, Lalo (then an unknown composer) wrote a violin concerto for Sarasate which proved so successful when Sarasate introduced it in London that Lalo's name became known to the music world. Its success inspired Lalo to write another large work for Sarasate, this time a work in the Spanish idiom, in honor of the nationality of his friend. He called it a symphony possibly because of the importance of the orchestra, and possibly because of the symphonic breadth of his developments. The work is in five movements. The best of these is the first, written in the accepted sonata form. Two principal themes—the first rhapsodic in character, the second tender—dominate the movement and are developed along monumental lines. The movement is intriguing in its use of Spanish melodic and rhythmic idioms. A sharply accentuated and highly rhythmic passage for orchestra introduces the second movement, a Scherzando, which contains two haunting melodies of Spanish color and passion. The third movement, Intermezzo, is rather long and rambling, and because of its lack of cohesion is sometimes omitted in public performances of the work. The fourth movement, Andante, is a dramatic pronouncement of rare intensity, in its colors and nuances and inflections more closely allied to Hungarian gypsy music than to Spanish—it is, indeed, curiously reminiscent of Sarasate's own *Zigeunerweisen*. A fiery Scherzo, exploiting the technical resources of the virtuoso, brings the work to a dynamic conclusion.

Recommended recording: VM-136 (Menuhin; Paris Symphony—Enesco).

# LASSO

ORLANDO DE LASSO (or Orlandus Lassus), b. Mons, Hainault, 1532. Was a choir-boy in the employ of Ferdinand Gonzaga, Viceroy of Sicily. When his voice broke in 1548, he went to Naples where he was engaged by a well-known patron of the arts, Marquis della Terza. In 1552, he went to Rome, and there became maestro di cappella at the Basilica of St. John Lateran. Towards the close of 1554, he settled in Amsterdam where he published the first volume of his madrigals. In 1556, he was appointed Kapellmeister to Duke Albert of Bavaria in Munich and henceforward achieved fame throughout Europe. In 1570, he was granted a patent of nobility by the Emperor, Maximilian II, and in 1574 was given the title of Chevalier de St. Pierre by Pope Gregory II. He died in Munich in 1594.

ORLANDO LASSO was the last and, in some respects, the greatest of the masters produced by the Netherland school of contrapuntal music, which included such masters as Josquin des Prés (see Josquin). "Profoundly human, and a profound believer—such was Orlandus," wrote Charles van den Borren. "With this was combined a propensity to interest himself in everything, to leave nothing in the shade, to explore to the utmost the entire domain of his art. Universality and fecundity—these were the distinctive traits of his genius. . . . As one penetrates more deeply into the labyrinth of his immense output, one is impressed by his attention to detail, and by the infinite devices through which he achieves diversity."

## CHORAL MUSIC

Since none of Lasso's works are heard more frequently than others, it is feasible to discuss his works *en masse*. His was a wondrous fertility, and he wrote in every known polyphonic form of the time. His music includes motets, masses, magnificats, passions, madrigals, psalms, songs, etc.

H. E. Wooldridge points out that Lasso's characteristic works are often "deficient in melodic beauty," that often "the voice parts seem not to spring complete from the imagination of the composer and to flow thence in parallel streams, but rather to have been put together with a view to create a harmonic effect." Notwithstanding such defects, Lasso's music remains an imposing artistic achievement because of its "grandeur and pathos."

Charles van den Borren feels that the Lasso motet is "the form in which he gave expression to the highest and most personal inspiration, the one in which, more than in any other, he gives witness of his lofty genius." Hugo Leichtentritt points to the *Seven Penitential Psalms* as the highest flight of Lasso's inspiration. "These powerful, serious pieces are eminent classical masterpieces of the first rank, and find their equal in certain Palestrina and Bach compositions. They show, besides, the fullest mastery of contrapuntal technique. Lasso's individuality, with its dark pathos, its passionate outcries, differs considerably from Palestrina's more serene, more celestial pure manner."

Palestrina was seven years Lasso's senior. Between them they dominated



the contrapuntal music of their time. Ernest Closson makes an interesting comparison between these two masters, which throws further illumination on Lasso's style: "Lasso has less grace than the Italian, he is less luminous, less perfect, above all else less mystic. However, if he is inferior to him from the point of view of religious sentiment, he surpasses him in secular composition through the originality of his harmony, his energy, his vigor and puissant vivacity, his strong conceptions, and more especially through his vernal freshness."

Recommended recordings: "Benedictus" from the *Mass Douce Memoire*, V-13498 (Dijon Cathedral Choir—Samson); "Benedictus" from the *Missa pro defunctis*, V-13360 (Choir of the Pius X School of Liturgical Music); *Die Martinsgans*, V-1962 (Frapp Family Choir); Madrigal, *Matona, mia cara*, V-22075 (Madrigal Group—Oglethorpe); Madrigal, *Mon cœur se recommande à vous*, V-20228 (Raymond Dixon); Madrigal, *Ola! o che bon eccho!*, V-4326 (Dresden Choir—Mauersberger).

## LEHÁR

FRANZ LEHÁR, b. Komárom, Hungary, 1870. Studied at the Prague Conservatory, where his teachers included Bennewitz and Förster. Dvořák advised him to devote himself exclusively to composition. In 1890 he began conducting bands, and in 1892 he was appointed conductor at the Theater-an-der-Wien in Vienna. The success of his operetta *Wiener Frauen* at the Theater-an-der-Wien in 1892 encouraged him to give up conducting and devote himself exclusively to the composition of operettas; and he has since then become one of the most famous operetta composers of our time.

LEHÁR's music is a model of what good operetta-writing should be. It is full of buoyant melodies that are assimilated at first hearing, and are then not easily forgotten. He boasts a lightness of touch, a grace of style, a light-heartedness that make his music an eloquent expression of the Viennese spirit. It is astutely orchestrated, and above everything else it has a perpetual freshness and spontaneity that give it engaging charm.

### OPERETTA

#### *The Merry Widow*

In three acts, book by Victor Leon and Leo Stein, first performed at the Theater-an-der-Wien in Vienna on December 30, 1905.

*The Merry Widow* is without doubt one of the most famous operettas of all time, and possibly the best-loved operetta of our generation. Who does not know the story of Prince Danilo and the charming heiress of Marsovia? Who does not recognize its music—the waltzes, the *Vilia* song, *The Girl at Maxim's*

—with its Straussian flavors? The operetta was born to succeed. When first presented at the Theater-an-der-Wien it was a sensation; some regarded it as the successor of *Die Fledermaus*. In London, where it was introduced in 1907, it ran for 778 performances. In America, where it was introduced in the same year, it totaled 242 performances. In Buenos Aires, in 1907, it was played simultaneously in five different theaters and in five languages. Nor has it, with the passing of years, diminished in popularity. It is performed periodically in every leading capital of Europe and in important cities of the United States; one of the most recent of such revivals—in New York, in 1943—was a smash hit. It has also earned the highly questionable honor of being the favorite theatrical work of Adolf Hitler (who conveniently forgot that the libretto was the work of Jews!).

The story is well known. Sonia, beautiful heiress from Marsovia, is in Paris where she is being scrupulously guarded by the Marsoviaan ambassador, Baron Popoff, who has instructions to see that she marries no one but a Marsoviaan, so as to keep her fortune in her country. The husband designated is Prince Danilo, but the beautiful heiress will not hear of him; she wants first to have some good times in Paris. She has them, particularly at Maxim's Café. Eventually, however, she falls in love with the Prince, and everything follows the prearranged plan.

The most famous single number in the operetta—and one of the most famous numbers in all operetta—is the *Merry Widow Waltz* which is heard in the third act.

Recommended recordings: "Waltz," V-8454 (Crooks); "Vilia," V-24729 (Jeanette MacDonald).

## LEKEU

GUILLAUME LEKEU, b. Heusy, near Verviers, France, 1870. Turned to music after receiving his bachelor's degree in philosophy at the University of Paris. He was a pupil of César Franck. In 1891 he won the second Prix de Rome. One year after this, a choral work, *Andromède*, was successfully performed at the Conservatory of Verviers. He continued composing until he contracted typhoid fever. He died in Angers in 1894, at the age of twenty-four.

**I**N the short span allotted him by fate, Lekeu produced only a handful of works, but the best of these have such distinction that his premature death obviously robbed us of a major composer. Romuald Vandelle placed him "at the head of all composers of his generation. None of his rivals . . . mani-

fested a genius more original, or an inspiration more exalted. From his music there comes a breath of grandeur and an intensity of life which are not deceiving. . . . When faith took possession of him, when for a moment he attained the peaks towards which he cast his gaze, his song became unique and large, powerfully harmonized with an intuitive feeling for timbres which astonishes and ravishes."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Adagio for Strings*

Composed in 1891, this elegiac and melancholy music was inspired by a motto from Georges Vanoir's *Les Fleurs pâles du souvenir* which is appended to the published score. The principal melody is heard in the violins. After it is developed, a stirring and deeply felt emotional section arrives, over which soars the poignant voice of a solo violin. The opening melody is then repeated, and the entire work ends on a note of tranquillity and tenderness.

Recommended recording: Decca-X236-7 (Boyd Neel Orchestra—Neel).

## SONATA

### *Violin Sonata in G major*

Eugene Ysaÿe commissioned Lekeu to compose a violin sonata for him. Lekeu composed it in 1892, and in the same year Ysaÿe introduced it. "It bubbles over with the freshness and joyousness of youth," wrote O. G. Sonneck, "though of youth meditative, not flippant. In the second of the three movements, by way of contrast, sadder chords are touched; and also, by way of contrast to the second movement, which the composer wished played with the utmost calm, the two outer movements revel in bold, biting dissonances. . . . The themes of the sonata show a remarkable lung capacity. They possess breadth. . . . Instead of dissecting, doubling, telescoping, breaking up his themes, and juggling with their component parts . . . Lekeu prefers to leave his themes more or less intact and sought to make the thematic narrative more convincing by repetition of important phrases at different pitches."

Recommended recording: VM-579 (Yehudi and Hephzibah Menuhin).

# LEONCAVALLO

RUGGIERO LEONCAVALLO, b. Naples, 1858. Studied music at the Naples Conservatory, and literature at the University of Bologna. For many years he traveled extensively, leading a hand-to-mouth existence. The Milanese publisher Ricordi became interested in him and commissioned him to write a trilogy of operas about the Renaissance. Before he could complete this project, he composed the opera that brought him permanent fame, *Pagliacci*. He died in Montecatini in 1919.

LEONCAVALLO remains a one-opera man. He wrote numerous operas—one of them, *Zaza*, being moderately successful, and still enjoying performances in leading opera houses; but the one opera that has kept his name alive and important in operatic history is *Pagliacci*.

## OPERA

### *Pagliacci*

In two acts, book by the composer, introduced at the Teatro dal Verme in Milan on May 21, 1892.

It was the success of Mascagni's one-act opera, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, that stimulated Leoncavallo to write a one-act opera of his own in an effort to attain that public success which had thus far eluded him. A singer named Lison Frandin induced the influential publisher Sonzogno to give Leoncavallo an interview. "Really," complained the music publisher, "the house is full; there are too many competitors in the field." However, he consented to meet the composer, and it was at this meeting that Leoncavallo played for Sonzogno the newly-written *Pagliacci*. During the first act, the publisher appeared apathetic, but after the second he embraced the composer and promised to see that the opera achieved performance.

It was because of Sonzogno's influence that *Pagliacci* was introduced at the Dal Verme theater on May 7, 1892. It will interest present-day concertgoers to learn that the conductor who officiated at this première was Arturo Toscanini.

"Well do I remember that eventful evening when it first saw the light," recorded Claude Trevor. "No one knew anything much about it except that it was a novelty, and of sufficient importance to have attracted the attention of Maurel, who created the baritone part. The crowded Dal Verme theater was literally in a frenzy on the above occasion, and at the fall of the curtain a scene of such wild enthusiasm took place as is to be seen only rarely."

Leoncavallo had prepared a libretto that was good theater and good sentiment, built (it is said) around a true incident. In the prologue, the clown Tonio appears before the closed curtain to explain to the audience that the play about to be seen is based upon life, and that the players are

not mere actors in a play but human beings. The play itself takes place in a village in Calabria and concerns a troupe of strolling players. Canio, the head of the troupe, is being betrayed by his beloved wife, Nedda, who is in love with Silvio, a young fellow from the village. Tonio, the poor clown, tries to attract the favor of Nedda but is mocked at so derisively that he swears revenge. One evening, Tonio leads Canio to a secret rendezvous where Nedda and Silvio are making love. Canio tries to kill Silvio, who escapes. He then vents his wrath on his wife, who is rescued by one of the players. Heartbroken, Canio exposes his grief in one of the most famous of all operatic arias, "*Ridi, Pagliaccio!*" In the second act, the strolling players are performing their piece, which bears a curious resemblance to what has actually happened among Canio, his wife, and Silvio. During this play-acting, Canio bids Nedda tell who her lover is. When she refuses, he kills her. Then Silvio, who is in the audience, rushes on the stage, and he, too, is killed by the bitter Canio. Then Canio turns to his audience and exclaims: "The comedy is ended!"

It is an effective and touching play, and for it Leoncavallo wrote effective and touching music. "The music," wrote F. Bonavia, "has all the lyrical flow of the Italian school, but the texture is infinitely more substantial than is the case with Mascagni. . . . The orchestration is also carefully balanced, and is free from vulgarities."

World-famous are the prologue for baritone and the tenor aria, "*Ridi, Pagliaccio!*" which closes Act I. Famous, too, are Nedda's Bird Song, "*Qual fiamma avea nel guardo!*" from Act I, and the Harlequin's Serenade from Act II.

Recommended recording: VM-249 (La Scala Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra—Ghione).

## LIADOV

ANATOL LIADOV, b. St. Petersburg, 1855. Was a student of Johansen and Rimsky-Korsakov at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. In 1878 he was appointed professor of harmony and theory at that conservatory. In 1894, he conducted the St. Petersburg Music Society. He also became a member of the committee founded by the Geographic Society to investigate Russian folk music. He died in Novgorod in 1914.

LIADOV was an intensely national composer. He worked in smaller forms than his famous contemporaries Mussorgsky, Borodin, and Rimsky-Korsakov, and his talent was more limited. But he had an inventive imagination, a gift for musical painting, and a genuine flair for native expression.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

*The Enchanted Lake*

Liadov was inordinately fond of fairy-tales about water sprites and demons. In *The Enchanted Lake* (Op. 62) he gives a musical picture of a lake inhabited by water nymphs, situated in the heart of a dense forest. Nothing happens. The composition is a placid tonal portrait of the cool and gentle waters in which are reflected the trees of the forest, and which with its nymphs suggests story-book enchantment. The musical material is slim, the principal subject—heard in the opening of the work in muted strings—being a musical depiction of the lake.

Recommended recording: V-14078 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

*Eight Russian Folk Songs*

This orchestral work of Liadov's, Op. 58, was directly inspired by his researches into folk music. The melodic materials are borrowed directly from Russian folk lore, but in their symphonic treatment at the hands of Liadov they acquire new personality. "The harmonizations are distinguished by certain peculiar traits that fit the song to an almost incredible degree," wrote Alfred J. Swan. "Such are his universal use of the major and the natural minor only, the absence of modulations within one song, the gradual blossoming out of the accompaniment into exquisite figuration and graceful contrapuntal phrases."

The work consists of eight sections, for which Liadov himself supplied pithy explanations: I. "Religious Chant": A religious song that is usually sung by children in religious processions; II. "Christmas Carol": A song about Christmas fairies who, according to Russian legend, appear at dawn in a golden sled drawn by six reindeer; III. "Plaintive Melody": A village song in which the melody is usually intoned by one solo voice, with the choir joining in and repeating it; IV. "Humorous Song": The wood wind provides a charming tune to which a young peasant dances with a mosquito—the buzzing of the mosquito reproduced by the violins; V. "Legend of the Birds": The twitterings and pipings of the birds are suggested in this simple melody; VI. "Cradle Song": A lullaby suggesting the loneliness and desolation of the Russian plains; VII. "Round Dance": A dance of great gaiety; VIII. "Village Dance Song": A dance and chorus in which the entire village participates on holidays.

Recommended recording: V-8491, 1681 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

# LISZT

FRANZ VON LISZT, b. Raiding, Hungary, 1811. He studied with Czerny and Salieri in Vienna, at the same time making appearances as a child prodigy of the piano. He later went on to Paris where he became a pupil of Reicha and Paër. In 1824 he made his first appearance in Paris as a pianist and was so successful that he became a darling of the Parisian salons. Between 1840 and 1848, Liszt toured the world of music, proving himself indisputably a monarch of the keyboard. In 1848, he was appointed Kapellmeister to the Grand Duke of Weimar, a post he held for thirteen years. It was at Weimar, and in 1849, that the friendship between Liszt and Wagner was cemented. After 1861, Liszt was drawn more and more closely to the Church. He spent much of his time in Rome in close contact with the Pope. In 1865, he was given the honorary title of Abbé, and in 1879 he submitted to the tonsure and took the vows of four minor orders. In 1870 he became president of an academy of music in Budapest, thereby adding a magnificent career as teacher to that of composer and virtuoso. He died in Bayreuth in 1886.

LISZT was an *important* composer rather than a *great* composer. He exercised a profound influence on the direction of musical history. Cecil Gray speaks of him as the "most important germinative force in modern music," and Philip Hale has said that "the more recent Germans and even the modern French were made possible by this Hungarian."

He belongs to that group of lesser creators who had talent without genius, who had technique without the important ideas or concepts which such a technique can serve, who had the imagination to dream heroic dreams without the divine spark which brings these dreams to successful realization on paper. "Skill, resourcefulness, intelligence, scholarship—these he brought to his composing," the editor of this volume wrote elsewhere. "But that additional quality, which can transform skill and scholarship into music of warmth, pulse, and heartbeat, was rarely his. His music is not of the stuff of which masterpieces are made. It has moments of high flights, but these are too frequently separated by pages that are trite and obvious. He conceived great tonal structures . . . and hoped to fill them with conceptions of epical scope. But with Liszt . . . what left the hand was not a mighty epic, but rather ambitious yet unrealized pretensions, insincere postures. Beethoven might have made of Liszt's *Faust* and *Dante* symphonies works not only heroic in the proportions of their structure, but equally heroic in the depth of their ideas and in the quality of their speech. With Liszt, these works, Gargantuan though they are in outline, are more often bombastic than profound, more often sentimental than poignant in emotion, more often pompous than dramatic.

"The true Liszt, stripped of postures, pretenses, and poses, has eluded his biographers. And the *real* Liszt, as composer, has evaded his critics. As a man, so the composer. He lacked a clearly defined personality. He was many things, some of them contradicting each other; consequently, he was nothing. In all the abundance produced by his tireless pen there are no qualities which we can point to as unmistakably belonging to Liszt. . . . Sometimes in his music

he was of the heart, other times of the head; sometimes he was sensuous, at other times spiritual. Not only in different works, but often in one and the same work (as in the *Faust* symphony) he strove for the rhapsodic, epic, lyric, pensive. He combined a love for the theatrical with a frequent striving for simplicity. A sickly sentimentality often struggled in his music with intellectual pronouncements. A sensual lyricism is often combined with spiritual counterpoint. He never seemed to know in which element he was truly himself. He never learned which style best represented his personality—whether the religious and often grandiose utterances of his oratorios, whether the hot gypsy blood of his rhapsodies, whether the treacle of his *Liebestraum*, whether the soft, old-fashioned sentiments of his piano concertos, whether the cerebral pretensions of his symphonies, whether the theatricalism of his tone poems, the *Todtentanz* or the *Mephisto* waltz, whether the superficial glitter and sparkle of many of his pieces for the piano and the *Fantasia on the Ruins of Athens*, whether the solid musicianship of his transcriptions for the piano. . . .

"It is not an accident that the only works of Liszt to have retained their popularity with music audiences are those which are least pretentious, those works which are pleasant, dramatically effective, lyrical, and not always artistically important, such as the two piano concertos, the piano sonata, the smaller pieces for the piano, the Hungarian rhapsodies, and the symphonic poem, *Les Préludes*. For Liszt was essentially a maker of theatrical music, music to warm the blood and arouse the senses; sublimity, spirituality, profundity—these were for greater composers than he."

## CONCERTOS

### Piano Concertos

Liszt composed two concertos for piano and orchestra. They are not concertos in the traditional sense of the term, but have a close spiritual kinship with his symphonic poems. Each concerto, though comprising several movements, is an integrated unit, played without interruption, the various sections tied together by the same thematic material. Usually sentimental, sometimes theatrical in the use of climax, not always lucidly or effectively orchestrated, his two concertos cannot be said to achieve genuine greatness; but they have charm, and they are felicitously written for the piano—and for these reasons they have survived.

Liszt's method in his concertos is outlined by Edward Dannreuther: "He works one main theme and one or two accessory themes into an infinite variety of shapes, evolving, as it were, the antithesis from out of thesis; by means of ingenious rhythmical changes he produces the most effective contrasts, and presents the leading sentiments of the piece in a surprisingly novel and striking manner."



*Concerto No. 1 in E-flat*

The first concerto, Op. 22, is the more famous of the two, and the more consistently original. It was written in 1849, and was first performed in Weimar on February 17, 1855, with Liszt playing the solo part and Hans von Bülow conducting. Though it is divided into four movements, it is actually a one-movement work. Four principal themes are developed freely. The most important of these is the opening subject—a bold and assertive melody vigorously proclaimed by the strings at the very start of the work. A second theme, more gentle and lyric in character, is first heard in muted 'celli and double basses, and is then elaborated upon by the solo piano. A third theme is like a scherzo. The work ends with a section (marked *Allegro marziale animato*) which, Liszt explained, is "only an urgent recapitulation of the earlier subject matter, with quickened, livelier rhythms."

It is amusing to note that, early in its life, this concerto created a storm because its instrumentation included a triangle. Hanslick derisively called it a "triangle concerto." Liszt rose bitterly to the defense of the work and of his use of the condemned instrument. "In the face of the most sapient proscription of the erudite critics, I shall continue to make use of percussion instruments, and I believe I shall derive from them effects which are as yet undreamed-of."

Recommended recording: CM-X17 (Gieseeking; London Philharmonic—Wood).

*Concerto No. 2 in A major*

More romantic than the first, and not without moments of pomposity, the second concerto (Op. 23) makes pleasant listening—at infrequent intervals. Repeated hearings discover not only the artificiality of its moods and emotions, but also its rambling construction and rather turgid instrumentation. It was composed in 1848. One principal theme dominates the entire work; it is voiced at the very opening of the concerto by the orchestra and is a melody of exultant and stately character. The concerto consists of the development, enlargement, and metamorphosis of this theme, with various minor subsidiary themes serving to bind the different sections of the work into a unity.

Recommended recording: Columbia CM-362 (Petri; London Philharmonic—Heward).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

Liszt's greatest single achievement in the field of orchestral music consisted in the development of the symphonic poem (or tone poem). As Saint-Saëns wrote: "This brilliant and fertile creation will be his best title to glory with posterity." Liszt was groping after a form more integrated than the symphony with its three or four (frequently) unrelated movements, a form that would

translate into tones a poetic or dramatic text. Borrowing from Berlioz the principle of the *idée fixe* (or *Leitmotif*, as Wagner was to call it), Liszt created a unified one-movement composition in which ideas were permitted to germinate freely at the will of the composer, to grow and change unhampered by the restrictions of any set structure. And he called this composition a symphonic poem.

Always passionately interested in literature, he strove in this new orchestral form to effect a oneness from the dichotomy of literature and music. For his symphonic poems, therefore, he drew freely upon literary sources—Goethe, Victor Hugo, Shakespeare, Lamartine, and Schiller—and made these literary sources serve as his program.

Liszt composed twelve symphonic poems, the most famous of which is, of course, *Les Préludes*. *Tasso* and *Mazeppa* are also heard from time to time. Considered artistically, they are hardly more than second-rate music. They betray the theatricalism of a stock-company performance. What Liszt intended as eloquence often became sheer bombast; too often the musical translation of the program falls into naïve literalness. But these works have their historical importance, for in them Liszt clearly defined a new form and definitely established programmatic writing for the orchestra. Without him, it is hardly likely that today we would have had the magnificent symphonic poems of Richard Strauss.

### *Mazeppa*

*Mazeppa* was inspired by the Victor Hugo poem. Originally a piano étude (composed in 1828, and enlarged and revised in 1837 and 1841), it was orchestrated by Liszt in 1850. The symphonic poem was first performed in Weimar, under Liszt's direction, on April 16, 1854.

*Mazeppa* is an almost literal musical description of the ordeal of a famous Asiatic chieftain during a historic race in which, for three days, he galloped on a fiery steed over plains and hills until his horse succumbed to fatigue. As Saint-Saëns wrote in describing the music: "The horse devours space, but all the interest is concentrated on the man who thinks and suffers. Towards the middle of the composition one is impressed by limitless immensity; horse and rider fly over the boundless steppe, and the man feels conquered by a thousand details of the expanse, and the more because he does not see them."

The principal theme of the composition—heard in the beginning of the work in the trombones, 'celli, and double basses—is descriptive of *Mazeppa* himself. The ride is reproduced musically with high vividness, and frequently with power. The brilliant sonorities and powerful dynamics are contrasted with occasional passages of poignancy suggesting the chieftain's sufferings. The work ends on a note of tranquillity, describing the birds that fly over horse and hero.

Recommended recording: Decca 20082-4 (Symphony Orchestra—Knappertsbusch).

### *Les Préludes*

Liszt composed *Les Préludes* in 1850 (though he began sketches as early as 1834), and it was first performed under his own direction in Weimar on February 23, 1854.

It was inspired by Lamartine's *Méditations poétiques*. Liszt himself has, somewhat freely and rhapsodically, summarized that portion of Lamartine's poem which inspired his composition: "What is life but a series of preludes to that unknown song whose initial solemn note is tolled by death? The enchanted dawn of every life is love; but where is the destiny on whose first delicious joys some storm does not break?—a storm whose deadly blast disperses youth's illusions, whose fatal bolt consumes its altar. And what soul thus cruelly bruised, when the tempest rolls away, seeks not to rest its memories in the calm of rural life? Yet man allows himself not long to taste the kindly quiet which first attracted him to Nature's lap; but when the trumpet gives the signal he hastens to join his comrades, no matter what the cause that calls him to arms. He rushes into the thick of the fight, and amid the uproar of the battle regains confidence in himself and his powers."

The principal theme of the work is heard at the very opening, a broad and stately subject in the double basses (in its first few notes an anticipation of the opening of the César Franck Symphony). The theme is then developed with power and majesty. A second subject is voiced by a horn quartet and muted violas, with accompanying violin and harp arpeggios. This, too, reaches a dramatic climax before a third theme—this time of a pastoral character, carried principally by the wood winds—makes its appearance. The composition is brought to a close, after stirring development of the principal themes, with a rousing *Allegro marziale*, which is introduced by horns and trumpets.

Recommended recording: VM-453 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy).

### *Tasso*

In 1849 the centenary of Goethe's birth was celebrated throughout Germany. In honor of this occasion there took place in Weimar a performance of Goethe's *Tasso*. For this performance, Liszt was asked to write a special overture. His symphonic poem *Tasso* was a revision of this overture (1854), and was first performed in its new version on April 19, 1854 in Weimar under the composer's direction. "We must confess," explained Liszt, "that . . . we were more immediately inspired by Byron's reverential pity for the shades of the great man whom he invoked than by the work of the German poet."

*Tasso*, tonal portrait of a hero, might well be termed Liszt's *Heldenleben*. It is subtitled "*Lamento e trionfo*" to emphasize the hero's suffering and triumph of the hero. "We sought to mark this dual idea in the very title of our work, and we should be glad to have succeeded in pointing this great contrast

—the genius who was misjudged during his life, surrounded after death with a halo that destroyed his enemies.”

Liszt’s “program” is as follows: “Tasso loved and suffered at Ferrara; he was avenged at Rome; his glory still lives in the folk songs of Venice. These three elements are inseparable from his immortal memory. To represent them in music, we first called up his august spirit as he still haunts the waters of Venice. Then we beheld his proud and melancholy figure as he passed through the festivals of Ferrara, where he had produced his masterpieces. Finally we followed him to Rome, the Eternal City, which offered him the crown and glorified in him the martyr and the poet.”

Two main themes form the basis of the symphonic poem. The first is heard in the opening of the work, fortissimo, in the ‘cellos and double basses, setting the mood and atmosphere for the entire composition. The chief subject, voiced by the bass clarinet with accompaniment of strings and harps, is the “Tasso” theme—an old gondoliers’ song that Liszt heard in Venice, and which in this work is touched with melancholy colors. Thus we hear the suffering of Tasso. His triumph appears in an Allegro con moto brio passage—proud and heroic.

## PIANO MUSIC

It was in his piano music that Liszt was at his greatest. He knew the piano intimately: its secrets, its idiosyncrasies—for he was one of the greatest virtuosos of all time. In writing for the keyboard, he knew how to cater to it, to exploit its powers, to conceal its shortcomings.

His was the greatest influence in the development of pianoforte writing between Chopin and Debussy. “We owe to him,” wrote Saint-Saëns, “the invention of picturesque musical notation, thanks to which, by an ingenious disposition of the notes and an extraordinary variety in presenting them to the eye, the composer contrived to indicate the character of the passage and the exact way it should be executed. Today, these refined methods are in general use. But above all, we owe to Liszt the introduction on the piano of orchestral effects and sonority.”

### Piano and Orchestra

For concertos, see: Concertos.

### *Hungarian Fantasy*

The *Hungarian Fantasy* is an adaptation, for piano and orchestra, of the material originally used in the fourteenth Hungarian Rhapsody for solo piano. It was composed in 1860. It opens with a majestic slow section which, following a cadenza, bursts into a fiery gypsy Allegretto, full of Hungarian

dash, color, and irrepressible energy. A graceful and captivating Vivace assai progresses nimbly and dynamically to the close of the composition. The work is noteworthy for the exquisite embroidery of the principal themes given by the solo piano.

Recommended recording: CM-X-120 (Kilenyi; Symphony Orchestra—Meyrowitz).

### Solo Piano

#### *Années de pèlerinage*

The *Années de pèlerinage* comprise three sets of tone pictures inspired by Liszt's travels. The first set, subtitled "The First Year," was written in 1835 when he was staying with the Countess Marie d'Agoult in Switzerland. It consists of tone pictures of Switzerland. "He sought," explains Guy de Pourtales, "to catch on the piano the impressions of a walk along the lake, an excursion into the Alps." It is divided into nine sections: I. "*Chapelle de Guillaume Tell*"; II. "*Au lac du Wallenstadt*"; III. "*Pastorale*"; IV. "*Au bord d'une source*"; V. "*Orage*"; VI. "*Vallée d'Obermann*"; VII. "*Eglogue*"; VIII. "*Le Mal du pays*"; IX. "*Les Cloches de Genève*."

The "*Vallée d'Obermann*" and the "*Eglogue*" were inspired by Byron and Obermann, and "*Les Cloches de Genève*" has appended to it an epigram from Byron's *Childe Harold*. The most famous of this set and the one most frequently heard in concerts is the exquisite "*Au bord d'une source*"—a beautiful quasi-impressionistic depiction of a spring of water and the poet's feelings at its side.

The "Second Year"—or second set—was inspired by Italy. These pieces were written at various times during the period of Liszt's infatuation with another of his great loves, the Princess Caroline of Sayn-Wittgenstein. It is in ten parts: I. "*Sposalizio*"; II. "*Il Penseroso*"; III. "*Canzonetta di Salvator Rosa*"; IV, V, and VI. "*Tre Sonetti di Petrarca*"; VII. "*Fantasia, quasi Sonate: D'Après une lecture de Dante*"; VIII, IX, and X. "*Venezia e Napoli*" ("*Gondoliera*," "*Canzone*," "*Tarantella*").

"*Sposalizio*" is an effective piece based on a bell theme, later contrasted by a hymnlike subject. "*Canzonetta di Salvator Rosa*" is a harmonization of a popular Italian song. The most famous of the set are the piece inspired by Petrarch's 104th Sonnet, and the "*Fantasia, quasi Sonate*" inspired by Dante.

The "Third Year" includes pieces that were originally published separately and then assembled posthumously as the third set of travel pictures. It comprises six numbers: I. "*Angelus*"; II. "*Cypres de la Villa d'Este*"; III. "*Les Jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*"; IV. "*Sunt lacrimae rerum*"; "*Marche funèbre*"; "*Sursum corda*."

This third set is in general inferior to the other two, though it does include so excellent a piece as "*Les Jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*," which stands

(as A. Eaglefield Hull pointed out) "at the very portal of the Impressionist movement in music."

Recommended recordings: "*Au bord d'une source*," C-69308D (Kentner); "*Venezia e Napoli: Gondoliera*," C-DX799 (Kilenyi); "*Tarantelle*" CM-X105 (Kentner).

### Ballades

The two Ballades, the first in A minor, the second in B minor, are among the most poetic of Liszt's piano works. Hans von Bülow went so far as to say that "it must be conceded that in this form Liszt greatly excelled Chopin in dramatic power; his melody also is more subtle, and his wonderful compelling technique excels Chopin's." The first ballade opens with a powerful and ductile melody and has a second subject of marchlike character. The second ballade opens with a plangent theme against a moaning bass which is also succeeded by a second theme of tempestuous and military character; after a grandiose climax comes an eloquent coda in pianissimo.

Recommended recording: B minor, CM-X97 (Kentner).

### Consolations

Frederick Niecks has analyzed the six *Consolations* as follows: "The first begins with a phrase of four bars. Out of one or rather two motives of this phrase the whole little piece is woven. We have here the sweet, melodious sighing of a devout, longing heart. The second presents itself as a continuous flow of melody. The accompaniment is flowing, and there is a piquant hesitancy in its continuity. The expression and the feeling expressed are simple, even naive, gentle and tender. In the tempo indication (*lento placido*) which heads the third of the *Consolations* will be found the word that probably describes better than any other single one the character of the piece. Peace and serenity speak out of every bar. It is the religious aspect of consolation that is presented in the fourth. No one can doubt the devoutness of this prayer. But love, too, is a great power. It manifests itself in Number Five. A crystalline purity pervades this piece. But even in resignation there is sweetness. This we may learn from the sensuously luxuriant sixth *Consolation*. The yearning here is now pensive, now passionate."

Recommended recording: *Consolation No. 3* in D-flat major, C-69688D (Sauer); the same in a transcription for violin and piano by Milstein, C-68479D (Milstein).

### Etudes

Liszt's études include the six *Paganini Etudes*, inspired by Paganini's visit to Paris in 1831 and built out of Paganini's caprices; the three *Etudes de Concert* (A-flat, F minor, D-flat); the two *Concert Etudes* (*Gnomenreigen* and *Waldesrauschen*); and the twelve *Etudes d'exécution transcendente* (1. "*Prelude*"; 2. A minor; 3. "*Paysage*"; 4. "*Mazeppa*"; 5. "*Feux-Follets*"; 6. "*Vision*"; 7. "*Eroica*"; 8. "*Wilde Jagd*"; 9. "*Ricordanza*"; 10. F. minor; 11. "*Har-*

*monies du soir*"; 12. "*Chasse-neige*"). The celebrated *La Campanella* is one of the Paganini études, and is an adaptation of the "Rondo à la clochette" movement from the Paganini Violin Concerto in B minor, Op. 7.

Liszt's études represent piano virtuosity at its most dazzling, with the fullest resources of the keyboard magically tapped to produce a cascade of sonorities, dynamics, and pianistic effects. It was Busoni's belief that these études "should be placed at the head of his [Liszt's] piano compositions . . . because they reflect, as no other, Liszt's personality . . . in his manifold lights and poses." They are by turns dramatic, sentimental, theatrical, electrifying, and soundly musical—and, seem to mirror the varied aspects of Liszt's own character. Schumann, reflecting on their technical difficulty, called them "studies of storm and dread."

Recommended recordings: *Etudes de Concert*, No. 2, C-DX960 (Kentner); *Etudes de Concert*, No. 3, C-68982D (Petri); *Gnomenreigen*, V-1184 (Rachmaninoff); *Waldesrauschen*, V-7270 (Bachaus); *Feux-Follets*, C-LX577 (Kitain); *Ricordanza*, C-LX846 (Petri); *Paganini Etude*, No. 2, V-1468 (Horowitz); *La Campanella*, V-6825 (Paderewski); *Paganini Etude*, No. 5, C-LF106 (Ciampi).

### *Hungarian Rhapsodies*

Liszt composed fifteen Hungarian Rhapsodies for the piano (four additional ones were published posthumously) in which he incorporated the melodies, rhythms, sentimental yearnings and passionate utterances of Hungarian gypsy music. The prototype of these rhapsodies is Schubert's *Divertissement à la hongroise* for two pianos, Op. 54, which may well have given Liszt not only the inspiration for writing in a free-fantasy form but also of casting Hungarian music in that form. In any case, it was Liszt who established the rhapsody form, and who popularized the name of rhapsody—although it was not he who composed the first musical work to bear the name "rhapsody"; that distinction belongs to Tomaschek (1774–1850), who composed six rhapsodies for the piano.

Liszt composed these rhapsodies between 1851 and 1854, following many years of research into Hungarian folk music (between 1839 and 1847 he edited ten volumes of Hungarian National Melodies). The rhapsodies have one uniform characteristic: they offer a breath-taking contrast between *lassan* (slow and languorous music) and *friskan* (gay, abandoned, passionate music). Combining his own flair for theatrical effects with the voluptuous or sentimental accents of gypsy music, Liszt produced in these rhapsodies music that is always dramatic, sometimes meretricious and superficial, but on the whole extraordinarily effective and pulse-quickenning.

The best-known of these rhapsodies are the second, fifth, ninth, twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth. The second is the most famous of all and is one of the most celebrated of all Liszt's works. Fiery, spirited, breath-taking in its climactic effects, dynamic in its rhythmic resources, the Second Rhapsody has obvious audience appeal. The Fifth Rhapsody is somewhat elegiac in character. The Ninth, subtitled "*Carnaval de Pesth*," has a contagious qual-

ity of joviality and good humor in its musical description of a fair. The Twelfth is distinguished for its brilliant bravura-writing for the piano. The Thirteenth has an Oriental character, with slow and seductive gypsy passages. The Fourteenth, perhaps the most eloquent of the rhapsodies, was adapted by the composer into the *Hungarian Fantasy* for piano and orchestra.

Six of these Hungarian rhapsodies—2, 5, 6, 9, 12, 14—were arranged by Franz Liszt and Franz Dopler for orchestra.

Recommended recordings: Rhapsody No. 2, original piano version, V-6626 (Cortot); in orchestral arrangement, V-14422 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski); Rhapsody No. 9, C-DX 987 (Kentner), Rhapsody No. 11, C-LFX248 (Ciampi); Rhapsody No. 12, V-11323 (De Greef); orchestral version, C-7243 (Halle Orchestra—Harty); Rhapsody No. 14, orchestral version, V-13596 (Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler); Rhapsody No. 15, C-DX799 (Kilenyi).

### Legends

Liszt's two legends for piano—*St. François d'Assise prêchant aux oiseaux* and *St. François de Paule marchant sur les flots*—are brilliant specimens of program writing. In the first (a description of St. Francis of Assisi preaching to the birds) we hear the twittering of the birds, combined with a hymnlike subject denoting St. Francis's sermon; the discourse ends in an eloquent whisper. The second legend—St. Francis of Paola walking on the waves—reproduces the motion and surge of the waters, in an exquisite impressionistic tone picture suggestive of Debussy.

Recommended recording: *St. François de Paule marchant sur les flots*, V-15245 (Cortot).

### Liebesträume

The celebrated (and hackneyed) *Liebestraum* is the third of a set of three *Liebesträume* (or nocturnes). These were originally written as songs (hence their lyric character) but were later adapted by Liszt for the piano. It is not known who inspired the third *Liebestraum*—unquestionably the most popular love piece for the piano. Sentimental biographers would have us believe that it constitutes Liszt's avowal of passion for this or that beloved; more probably it was written for no one in particular. Sentimental, tender, formal, its popularity is easy to understand.

Recommended recording: V-36337 (Rubinstein).

### Transcriptions

Besides his original works for the piano, there exists a large literature of piano music comprising Liszt's transcriptions from the music of other masters. Liszt made remarkable piano adaptations of many classics—adaptations now permanently entrenched in the piano repertory by virtue of their brilliant writing. As a matter of fact, it may even be said that Liszt's piano transcriptions of music by Bach and Schubert were a substantial factor in bringing to a large public the works of those hitherto rather neglected composers.



Herbert Westerly divides Liszt's transcriptions into two classes. The first consists of a plain restatement of the original work without cadenzas, recreating for the piano what the original composer had said in another medium; in this group are Liszt's transcriptions of songs by Schubert, Schumann, etc. In the second class we have the paraphrase which resembles an extemporization in which the original theme, or themes, form the basis for elaborate developments, variations, etc., many of them original with the transcriber; examples are the Mozart *Don Giovanni Fantasy* and the Verdi *Rigoletto Paraphrase*.

Among the most felicitous of Liszt's transcriptions for the piano are the following:

Bach: *Fantasia and Fugue in G minor*, and *Prelude and Fugue in G minor*, both adapted from the organ.

Gounod: *The Waltz from Faust*.

Schubert: *Auf dem Wasser zu singen*; *Der Erlkönig*; *Gretchen am Spinnrade*; *Hark, Hark, the Lark*; *Der Lindenbaum*; and *Das Wandern*.

Schumann: *"Frühlingsnacht, and Widmung*.

Wagner: *Tannhäuser Overture*, and the *"Liebestod"* from *Tristan und Isolde*.

Recommended recordings: *Waltz from Faust*, C-69031D (Petri); *Don Giovanni Fantasy*, VM-577 (Barere); *Gretchen am Spinnrade* C-69554D (Petri); *Das Wandern*, V-1161 (Rachmaninoff); *Frühlingsnacht* V-8766 (Lhevinne); *Rigoletto Paraphrase*, C-DB76 (Scharer).

## SONATA

### *Piano Sonata in B minor*

Liszt's piano sonata is a free fantasia rather than an organic sonata. In all its sprawling and not always too well organized length, it curiously combines great with bombastic music. Yet it is so well written for the keyboard (Joseffy once said that it lay so beautifully for the hand that it played itself), and it has so many moments of genuine power and inspiration, that it has won a deserved place of honor in piano literature.

James Gibbons Huneker has thus characterized its best pages: "The gloom, the harmonic haze out of which emerges the bold theme in octaves, the leap from G to A sharp in the opening bars—how Liszt has made this and the succeeding intervals his own! Power there is—sardonic power. How incisively the composer taps your consciousness in the next theme of the sonata, with its four knocking D's! What follows is like a drama enacted in the netherworld. . . . The chorale, which is usually the meat of a Liszt composition, soon appears and proclaims the composer's religious belief in powerful accents. . . . After the faint return of the opening motive, appears the sigh of sentiment, of passion, of abandonment which engenders the notion that when Liszt was not kneeling before a crucifix, he was before a woman. . . .

The rustle of silken attire is in every bar; sensuous imagery, faint perfume of femininity lurks in each trill and cadence. . . . The bold utterance so triumphantly proclaimed at the outset is sounded with chordal pomp and power. . . . Another flank movement of the 'ewig weibliche,' this time in the seductive key of B major, made mock of by the strong man of music who . . . views his early disorder with grim and contrapuntal glee. . . . All this leads to a prestissimo finale of startling splendor. Nothing more exciting is there in the literature of the piano. . . . Then follow a few bars of that very Beethoven-like andante, a moving return of the early themes, and silently the first lento descends to the subterranean depths whence it emerged; then a true Liszt chord-sequence and a stillness in B major."

Recommended recording: VM-380 (Horowitz).

## SONGS

Liszt was a gifted composer of songs. We do not find in his best songs the subtleties of expression of Schubert, the intensity of Brahms, or the dramatic accents of Hugo Wolf. What he was capable of was a pleasing lyric line that moved easily and gracefully without faltering; touching sentiments; an engaging simplicity of manner. His songs are singable, and their charm lies on the surface for all to recognize at first glimpse. Characteristic of Liszt's talent in this direction are songs like *Der du von dem Himmel bist*, *Es muss ein Wunderbares sein*, *Die Lorelei*, *Ueber allen Gipfeln ist Ruh'*, and *Wie singt die Lerche schön*.

Recommended recordings: *Der du von dem Himmel bist*, C-69733 (Wolff); *Es muss ein Wunderbares sein*, C-69732D (Wolff); *Die Lorelei*, V-7075 (Onegin); *Ueber allen Gipfeln ist Ruh'*, C-69732 (Wolff); *Wie singt die Lerche schön*, C-69732 (Wolff).

# LOEFFLER

CHARLES MARTIN LOEFFLER, b. Mühlhausen, Alsace, 1861. Studied the violin with Joachim in Berlin and with Massart in Paris. In 1881, he came to the United States to join Damrosch's orchestra. When, during that year, the Boston Symphony Orchestra was founded, Loeffler was appointed its concertmaster, and his first important works were introduced by that organization. In 1905 Loeffler retired from his orchestral post to devote himself to composition. He died in Medfield, Massachusetts, in 1935.

LOEFFLER was essentially a disciple of the post-impressionist school. The expression of beauty in a fluid outflow was the high ideal to which he clung tenaciously throughout his life. Loeffler can be said to have continued where Debussy left off. He brought the art of musical impressionism to its

inevitable—perhaps final—destination. Loeffler's music is not merely the sensuous experience of an emotional poet. Exquisitely refined and rarefied, it yet has a definite muscle and sinew, a perceptible spine, a solidity and depth. A born instinct for orchestration, a feeling for form and design, and a technical grasp that was always consummate enabled Loeffler to select the most felicitous mould in which to cast his musical ideas. In his music, content and form borrow qualities from each other in an inextricable wedlock of beauty.

## CHORAL MUSIC

### *Evocation*

Loeffler composed *Evocation*, for women's chorus, speaking voice, and orchestra, to help dedicate Severance Hall, the new home of the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra. It was introduced by that orchestra on February 5, 1931. The work was inspired by J. W. Mackail's *Epigrams from the Greek Anthology*.

The composer himself provided the following analysis: "The very beginning of the music, namely the fugue out of which grows the one most important theme a few pages later on, suggested itself to me on account of its harmonically chaotic theme, alike as I imagined to the matter which in confusion marked the beginning of the fine temple of music which the architects had in mind. . . . This fugue theme . . . becomes in its progress clarified, and later on the essence of the only important theme in my work. The short fugue is interrupted by the motif of the Singing Stone . . . by spoken although hushed words taken from an ancient Greek epigram. After this, approaches the songlike theme, followed by what attempts to picture the nymphs enjoying their Arcadian happiness and their encounter with the great God Pan. . . . After this interlude there is a return to the principal theme which leads to our encounter with the Singing Stone, who confides to us who he is in these words, in a hushed and mysterious voice: 'Remember the Singing Stone.' The last scene takes us to the favorite stream of the nymphs and naiads, whence Artemis, the goddess, metamorphosed Syrinx. We hear once more Pan's rustic lay, from afar . . . the nymphs calling him, calling him. And here ends our dream."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *A Pagan Poem*

*A Pagan Poem*, Op. 14, is deservedly Loeffler's most famous work, for it is the completest and most successful realization of his impressionist writing. We have here a placidity of style, a fine ability to etch tone colors of the greatest delicacy and most elusive suggestiveness, a half-sensual, half-ethereal beauty, which make hearing it a poignant esthetic experience. The work was inspired by the eighth Eclogue of Virgil, in which a Thessalian maiden ex-

ercises her necromantic powers in order to bring back the lover who had deserted her. The music is not, however, as Loeffler explained, a literal musical translation of the eclogue, but a musical fantasia inspired by Virgil's poetry.

Originally, Loeffler composed *A Pagan Poem* as a chamber-music work for piano, two flutes, oboe, clarinet, English horn, two horns, three trumpets, viola, and double-bass. This was in 1901. In 1903 he arranged it for two pianos and three trumpets. A few years later he orchestrated it, and in this final form it was introduced by the Boston Symphony Orchestra on November 23, 1907. Karl Muck was conductor, and Heinrich Gebhard played the piano part.

*A Pagan Poem* is a sustained tonal painting whose strokes are laid on with the utmost delicacy and restrained feeling. As Philip Hale wrote, Loeffler "believes in tonal impressions rather than in thematic development. . . . He has delicate sentiment, the curiosity of the hunger after nuances, the love of the macabre, the cool fire that consumes and is more deadly than fierce, panting flame."

Recommended recording: VM-376 (Eastman Rochester Symphony—Hanson).

## LOEWE

KARL LOEWE, b. Löbejün, near Halle, Germany, 1796. Studied at the University of Halle. During most of his life he served as choirmaster of St. Jacob's Church in Stettin and as teacher at the Stettin Gymnasium, combining these tasks with the writing of music. His active career was brought to an end by paralysis in 1866. He died three years later in Kiel.

### SONGS

THE greatest significance of that genius of song, Karl Loewe, consists in the fact that he was father of the ballad as a musical form for voice and piano. He had a fine gift for sustained melody, never sacrificing lyricism for dramatic effects or atmosphere. He wrote naturally for the voice, and his ballads have deservedly won a permanent place in the song repertoire. "The musical form of the ballad," wrote Hugo Riemann, "was first created by Loewe. He wrote with epical breadth without losing any of the sharp characteristic details."

It was in 1818, at the beginning of his career as a composer, that Loewe composed his first masterpieces, *Edward* (Op. 1, No. 1) and *Der Erbkönig* (Op. 1, No. 3). "Even now," commented Dyneley Hussey and Francis Toye, "this setting of the *Erlkönig* has not been entirely swamped by Schubert's, and in the opinion of some competent judges his interpretation of the text is more conscientious if not more effective."

Other masterpieces by Loewe which are frequently heard on programs of vocal music include: *Archibald Douglas*, Op. 128, *Heinrich der Vogler*, Op. 56, No. 1, *Prinz Eugen, der edle Ritter*, *Tom der Reimer*, Op. 135, and *Die Uhr*, Op. 123, No. 3.

Recommended recordings: *Edward*, V-7486 (Tibbett); *Der Erbkönig*, C-9110M (Henschel); *Heinrich der Vogler*, C-9110M (Henschel); *Tom der Reimer*, Decca 25757 (Tauber); *Die Uhr*, Decca 25757 (Tauber).

## LULLY

JEAN BAPTISTE LULLY, b. Florence, 1632. Was brought to Paris by the Chevalier de Guise, who placed him in the service of Mlle. de Montpensier. He was later employed in Louis XIV's orchestra, soon becoming one of the most famous musicians at the French court. The king conferred a patent of nobility on him; then appointed him "Secrétaire du Roi," and later "Maître de Musique." In 1669 he became director of an opera house in Paris, and for this he composed a long series of successful operas which placed him in the front rank of the composers of his time. He died in Paris in 1687.

LULLY is often spoken of as the father of French opera. He transplanted the Italian opera to French soil and through his writings established a model which French composers were to imitate and develop. His immediate successor was Rameau (1683-1764), who was influenced by Lully. And from this moment on, the history of French opera unfolds in full glory.

### OPERAS

Since none of Lully's operas have survived—only excerpts from them being heard today—it is convenient to treat them collectively. His best operas were *Thésée* (1675); *Atys* (1676); *Proserpine* (1680); *Amadis* (1684); *Roland* (1685); and—in Henri Prunières' opinion the greatest of all Lully operas—*Acis et Galatée* (1686).

Lully modeled his operas after those of Caccini (1550-1618), one of the earliest masters of Italian opera. But Lully enriched instrumentation, replaced the *secco recitative* by accompanied recitative (making it follow more closely the inflections of human speech), and developed harmonic language. Most important of all, he contributed to the opera form a lyricism of engaging charm which inspired Mme de Sévigné to exclaim, "I do not believe that there is any sweeter music under heaven than Lully's!"

Parry discussed Lully's achievements in opera as follows: "Lully developed a scheme of opera which was more mature and complete than any other of his time. The texture of his work on the whole is crude and bald, but the definition of the various items which go to make up his operatic scheme is

complete as far as it goes. . . . In the first place, the plan of his overture is thoroughly distinct, and very happily conceived as an introduction to what it follows. . . . Lully shows excellent sense of relief and proportion, and in regulating the relation of the respective acts and scenes to one another; and he is conspicuously successful for his time in shaking himself free from the ecclesiastical associations of the modes, and adopting a thoroughly secular manner. . . . His instinct for orderliness and system in laying out the musical material was in advance of the age. . . . He was among the first to make a notable use of what is called the aria form. . . . Lully's type of opera was an immense advance over the first experiments in plan, in definiteness of expression and rhythm, and in variety of subdivision into component ballet movements, choruses, instrumental interludes, arias, recitatives, and so forth."

Numerous excerpts from the operas are heard fairly often, and these represent virtually all that is known of Lully's music. They include the Minuet from *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (which Richard Strauss interpolated in his own suite of the same name); the "*Marche des sacrificateurs*" from *Thésée*; the Minuet from *Amadis*; and the "*Menuet des ombres heureuses*" from *Proserpine*. Some of the overtures are also familiar, chiefly those to *Thésée* and to *Alceste*.

Recommended recordings: *Alceste Overture*, V-7427 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski); "*Air d'Amadis*" from *Amadis de Gaule*, C-P9153M (Villabella); "*Air de Renaud*" from *Armide et Renaud*, C-P9153 (Villabella); Gavotte from *Atys*, C-P17148D (Symphony Orchestra—Cauchie); "*Air de Mérope*," from *Persée*, C-P9154M (Renaux); "*Menuet des ombres heureuses*," from *Proserpine*, C-P17148D (Symphony Orchestra—Cauchie); "*Air de la fée Logistille*," from *Roland*, C-P9154M (Columbia); Minuet, from *Temple of Peace*, C-11566D (Minneapolis Symphony—Mitropoulos); Nocturne from *Le Triomphe d'amour*, V-7424 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

## MACDOWELL

EDWARD MACDOWELL, b. New York City, 1861. After studying the piano with Teresa Carreño, he became a pupil of Marmontel and Savard at the Paris Conservatory. Further study followed at Stuttgart, Wiesbaden, and Frankfurt. In 1881, he became head of the piano department at the Darmstadt Conservatory. One year later he introduced his First Piano Suite at the Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein. In 1888 he returned to the United States, becoming active as composer, pianist, and teacher. In 1896, he became professor of music in the newly founded music department of Columbia University. He retired in 1904 as a result of a disagreement with the University authorities. He died in New York in 1908.

EDWARD MACDOWELL is by many regarded as one of our foremost American composers. He had freshness of style, technical facility, poetic feeling, and unquestioned integrity. Strongly influenced by European models, his music has a foreign atmosphere. But it is a highly personal expression,

charged with intense emotions. Huneker pointed out that we find in Macdowell "not the sham ecstasies of medieval romance, but the deep and tender sentiment which we encounter in the poetry of Keats—in the magic of a man half veiled by flying clouds; in the mystery and scent of old tangled gardens." Gilman has singled out the outstanding qualities of Macdowell's music as follows: "great buoyancy and freshness," "an abounding vitality," "a constant juxtaposed tenderness and strength," and a "pervading nobility of tone and feeling."

## CONCERTO

### *Piano Concerto No. 2 in D minor*

Macdowell composed his Second Piano Concerto in Germany in 1884–85, but it was not introduced until four years later—on March 5, 1889—when it was played at a concert by the Theodore Thomas Orchestra with the composer at the piano. (At this same concert, the Tchaikovsky Fifth Symphony was introduced to America).

The first movement, *Larghetto*, opens with a brief pianissimo subject for muted strings, which is answered by a broad fortissimo section for solo piano. After a subject for wood-winds and second violins, the solo piano presents the principal theme of the movement. A second theme is later voiced by the 'cellos, and both themes are elaborately developed. The second movement, *Presto giocoso*, is a light and graceful scherzo; an elf-like subject (partly spoken by wood-winds and strings, and partly by the solo piano) is contrasted with a vigorous theme for horns. In the third movement (*Largo*), an introduction foreshadows the principal theme of the movement—a theme that emerges brilliantly in the solo piano in the ensuing *Molto Allegro*, after being first introduced by the wood-winds.

This concerto (Op. 23) has consistently remained one of the most often performed of Macdowell's works. Its romantic ardor and the beauty of its thematic material bring inexhaustible delight to its listeners. John F. Porte calls it "full of feeling, brilliantly cohesive and logical, with good material that is handled with confident skill. . . . Its character . . . is strong and virile, containing many passages of pure tonal beauty and eloquent expressiveness."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Indian Suite*

The Indian Suite, Op. 48, is the second of Macdowell's suites for orchestra. It was first performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra on January 23, 1896 under the baton of Emil Pauer.

The famous American composer, Henry F. Gilbert—who was Macdowell's pupil—has left us interesting notes about the composition of this work. "Macdowell became somewhat interested in Indian lore, and was curious to see

some real Indian music. . . I brought him Baker's *Die Musik der Nord-amerikanischen Wilden*. . . . From Baker's book the main themes of his *Indian Suite* are taken. . . . Although all the themes have been changed, more or less, the changes have always been in the direction of musical beauty, and enough of the original tune has been retained to leave no doubt as to its barbaric flavor."

The Suite is in five movements:

I. Legend. Gilbert informs us "that the theme occurs in a sacred ceremony of the Iroquois. Although considerably altered as regards rhythmic values, the melodic contour is well preserved."

II. Love Song. A love song of the Kiowas is used almost in its entirety as the theme of this movement.

III. In War Time. This movement is inspired by a theme ascribed to supernatural origin by the Indians of the Atlantic Coast.

IV. Dirge. Derived from a Kiowa tune, this is a woman's song of mourning for her lost son.

V. Village Festival. Here a women's dance and a war song, both of Iroquois origin, are utilized.

Recommended recording: CM-373 (C.B.S. Symphony—Barlow).

## PIANO MUSIC

### *Woodland Sketches*

The most famous of Macdowell's suites for the piano (Op. 51) comprises ten numbers: "To A Wild Rose"; "Will-o'-the-Wisp"; "At An Old Trysting Place"; "In Autumn"; "From an Indian Lodge"; "To a Water Lily"; "From Uncle Remus"; "A Deserted Farm"; "By a Meadow Brook"; "Told at Sunset." "To a Wild Rose" and "To a Water Lily" are famous.

These are exquisite little descriptive poems for the piano in which, as Henry T. Finck remarked, there is a "commingling of poetic fancies with the musical thought." "Here," adds Finck, "there is not only originality and beauty of music, but a mirroring in it of pictures."

"His pianoforte poems," wrote John F. Porte, "are absolutely responsive to elemental moods, unaffected in style and yet distinguished, free from the commonplace. Speaking with a personal note that is inimitable, they are mature nature poems of an exquisitely charming order, beautiful not only for their outward manifestations but for the deeper significance they give to their sources of inspiration."

Recommended recordings: "To A Wild Rose," V-22161 (Eaver); "Will-o'-the-Wisp," V-20803 (Eaver); "From An Indian Lodge," arranged for orchestra, V-20342 (Victor Orchestra—Bourdon); "To A Water Lily," V-22161 (Eaver); "From Uncle Remus," V-20803 (Eaver); "A Deserted Farm," V-22161 (Eaver).



## SONATA

*Keltic Sonata*

The *Keltic Sonata* in E minor, Op. 59, is the fourth and greatest of Macdowell's sonatas for piano. For his inspiration, Macdowell went to that period of Irish history embodied in the epic called the *Red Branch Cycle* and to the life and death of Ireland's legendary hero, Cuchullin. But, in Macdowell's own words, the music was intended rather as "a commentary on the subject than an actual depiction of it." The following quotation heads the sonata:

"Who minds now Keltic tales of yore,  
Dark Druid's rhymes that thrall,  
Deirdre's song and wizard lore,  
Or great Cuchullin's fall?"

"Not only is the sonata Celtic to the core—all vibrant and aflame with the tremendous moods and passions of all the ancient Gaels," wrote Lawrence Gilman, "but he has flushed his music so glowingly with the inward fire, has colored it so splendidly with the inward vision, that the resultant product achieves an effect of sustained inspiration, of immense concentrated vitality, of sheer poetic magnificence, which is fairly overwhelming."

The first movement, marked "With great power and dignity," has the quality of an Irish epic—spacious, expansive in design, filled with mysticism. The middle movement ("With naive tenderness") is a beautiful portrait of Deirdre—a movement of haunting loveliness. It is the third movement ("Very swift and fierce") which is the crowning section of the sonata—a musical description of the death of the hero Cuchullin. "For supreme majesty of conception," wrote Gilman, "for sublime pathos and solemnity and depth of emotion, it is a musical achievement which one is tempted to believe is scarcely to be paralleled by anything that has been written since *Siegfried's Death Music*; certainly it is Macdowell's loftiest flight."

## SONGS

Macdowell was uniquely successful in the song form, and some of his love songs are among the most poignant in American music. He wrote simply, emotionally, tapping a vein of tenderness that was his own. "Much of Macdowell's abundant fresh melody," wrote Henry T. Finck, "has the simplicity and apparent inevitableness of folk-songs. . . . There is an emotional realism—the fitness of the music to the words—which I have always regarded, next to the incessant flow of melody and the always harmonically interesting piano parts, as the most praiseworthy thing in Macdowell's songs."

*Six Love Songs*

The six songs included in Op. 40 are: "Sweet Blue-Eyed Maid"; "Sweet-heart, Tell Me"; "Thy Beaming Eyes"; "For Sweet Love's Sake"; "Oh Lovely Rose"; "I Ask But This."

"These songs," wrote John F. Porte, "have a charm, tenderness of feeling, and beauty of expression that are often irresistible. They are essentially the love songs of a romantic but refined and gifted poet. As a whole, they are singularly free from sexual seriousness. There is an idealism, wonderfully fresh and pure, about them."

Recommended recording: "Thy Beaming Eyes," V-1172 (Tibbett).

### *Eight Songs*

The titles of the eight songs in the Op. 47 cycle are as follows: "The Robin Sings in the Apple Tree"; "Midsummer Lullaby"; "Folk Song"; "Confidence"; "The West Wind Croons in the Cedar Trees"; "In the Woods"; "The Sea"; "Through the Meadow."

Here, wrote Porte, "Macedowell entered into his finest and most mature period. They are beautifully characteristic, and full of that engaging romance, piquancy, and poetic charm that distinguish his best work."

Recommended recording: "The Sea," V-4017 (Dadmun).

## MAHLER

GUSTAV MAHLER, b. Kalischt, Bohemia, 1860. Studied at the Vienna Conservatory, following which he filled several minor posts as conductor. After a successful performance of Mendelssohn's *St. Paul* in Leipzig in 1885, he was appointed conductor at the Prague Opera. Subsequent engagements in Budapest and Hamburg, and at the Vienna Opera, marked him as one of the greatest conductors of his time. He combined his conductorial assignments with composing, his first symphony being introduced in 1889. In 1908 Mahler became conductor at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, and, in 1909, conductor of the New York Philharmonic. Hard work, combined with misunderstanding and harsh criticisms, undermined his health. He collapsed in New York, was taken back to Europe, and died in Vienna in 1911.

LIKE Bruckner, Mahler has been a provocative and controversial figure in music. There are those who feel that Mahler's symphonies represent the apotheosis of that form, that his was a prophetic voice in music—that, in short, he was one of music's great masters, a worthy successor of Beethoven and Brahms. These Mahler devotees include such famous musicians as Paul Bekker, Adolf Weissman, Arnold Schönberg, Bruno Walter, and Willem Mengelberg. Others, however, condemn Mahler for his garrulousness, his habit of using a paragraph to do the work of a sentence, his tendency to yield to hysteria, bombast, pompousness.

The truth lies somewhere midway between these two poles of critical opinion. It is true that Mahler was prolix, that he lacked the power of self-criticism,

that he delighted in pompous attitudes. Yet, at his best, he was capable of achieving a unique eloquence and sublimity. He had a mature, often profound, vision. There is, in his best pages, a depth of expressiveness which few composers since Beethoven have achieved—an effort, sometimes successful, to make music convey abstract ideas and concepts.

Moreover, he was a master of his craft, with a remarkable grasp of form, a command of harmonic construction, and an extraordinary inventiveness in the use of musical materials. He is still a model for orchestration. "For him," as H. T. Parker once wrote, "the orchestra is a single, sounding unit, a cosmos alive with a host of embryonic or evolutionary possibilities; always a far more closely welded unity than a mere sum of the various coloristic parts. But in this cosmos the various sonorous elements often assume huge proportions."

## SONG CYCLES

### *Kindertotenlieder*

Mahler's cycle for voice and orchestra was composed between 1900 and 1902, and was first performed by the New York Philharmonic, under the composer's direction, on January 26, 1910.

The poet Friedrich Rückert, having lost two children, was inspired in his grief to write more than a hundred elegies; and it was five of these that Mahler chose for setting to music. *Kindertotenlieder* is one of his most moving works, an eloquent expression of grief—indeed, an expression inextricably bound up with his own personal life, for in 1906 he, too, lost a child; and he never abandoned the superstitious idea that he himself had brought on his child's death by composing this set of elegies to dead children a few years earlier.

The five movements are entitled as follows:

I. "*Nun will die Sonn' so hell aufgehen*" ("Once More the Sun Would Gild the Morn").

II. "*Nun seh' ich wohl, warum so dunkel Flammen*" ("Ah, Now I Know Why Oft I Caught You Gazing").

III. "*Wenn dein Mütterlein*" ("When My Mother Dears").

IV. "*Oft denk' ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen*" ("I Think Oft They've Only Gone Abroad").

V. "*In diesem Wetter*" ("In Such a Tempest").

In commenting on this eloquent work, Bruno Walter remarked that here Mahler proved "his exquisite poetic understanding. . . . Mahler created a soul-stirring specimen of lyric art. Just as the poems are in no sense popular poetry, so his music, too, is entirely removed from the popular mood of his former songs. Noble symphonic melodies form their musical substance."

### *Das Lied von der Erde*

There are critics who consider this work Mahler's masterpiece, the one work in which he rarely descends from the high altitudes of sublimity and elo-

quence on which the entire composition is poised. Certainly, in few of his works did he achieve such an intensity of feeling, so profoundly pessimistic a feeling of despair and futility couched in unforgettable accents of pathos and pain; and in few does his expression take on such poetic shades and nuances.

*Das Lied von der Erde*—a cycle of six songs based upon old Chinese poems adapted into German by Hans Bethge—is, as one unnamed analyst describes it, an expression of “the philosophy of human existence. The first poem is epicurean, a drinking song—the world is full of woe, the skies are eternal, earth will long endure, but man’s life is but a span. . . . The second poem describes nature in the pall of autumnal mists. . . . The lamp of life burns low, the poet’s heart is filled with gloom, for it despairs of ever again seeing that sun of love which might, perchance, dry his tears—and he longs for rest. The third song is of youth, and its imagery is authentically Chinese—the picture of a bridge across a pond, a gay pavilion, people making merry, and all reflected upside down in the watery mirror. The fourth describes a scene of lovers wandering through an enchanted landscape, picking flowers and bestowing languishing looks upon one another. . . . But the pessimistic mood returns (No. 5): All life is a dream, full of woe; so, therefore, wine again; let us sleep the sleep of drunkenness. Finally (in No. 6) two poems are united: the poet sees the world in a drunken sleep, longs for his friend that he may say farewell, resolves no more to seek happiness away from home, and awaits the end while Spring wakens the world anew.”

Mahler referred to this work as a “symphony for tenor and contralto (or baritone) and orchestra.” It is, of course, not a symphony, but a song cycle. What Mahler wished to emphasize was (first) the importance of his orchestra, which is much more than an accompaniment to the voices, being actually an essential and integral part of the entire artistic conception; and (second) that his solo voices are not soloists in the traditional meaning, but also are inextricable parts of the symphonic fabric.

In this music—concise, lean, concentrated, and profoundly moving—Mahler has once and for all given expression to an overwhelming frustration and *Weltschmerz*. Composing it in 1908, toward the close of his life, Mahler may well have poured into this music his own suffering in the face of a world’s indifference to and misunderstanding of his life work. He never heard his masterpiece performed. A year and a half after his death in November of 1911—it was introduced in Munich, under the baton of Bruno Walter.

The six sections of this work are as follows:

I. “*Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde*,” (“The Drinking Song of Earthly Woe”), poem by Li-Tai-Po, for tenor.

II. “*Der Einsame im Herbst*” (“The Lonely One in Autumn”), poem by Tsching-Tsi, for contralto.

III. “*Von der Jugend*” (“Of Youth”), poem by Li-Tai-Po, for tenor.

IV. “*Von der Schönheit*” (“Of Beauty”), poem by Li-Tai-Po, for contralto.

V. "*Der Trunkene im Frühling*" ("The Drunken One in Spring"), poem by Li-Tai-Po, for tenor.

VIa. "*In Erwartung des Freundes*" ("Awaiting a Friend"), poem by Mong-Kao-Jen, for contralto.

Vib. "*Der Abschied des Freundes*" ("The Farewell of a Friend"), poem by Wang-Wei, for contralto.

Recommended recording: CM-300 (Kullman and Thorberg; Vienna Philharmonic—Walter).

## SONGS

Though Mahler is best known as a symphonist, he composed many songs of rare beauty and depth of feeling. His poetic nature found the song form uniquely grateful, and he wrote numerous lyrical pieces original in conception and freshly projected. Bruno Walter thus describes Mahler's best songs: "In every one of the songs we find tell-tale signs of productivity: an original musical idea. Not one of them is merely sentimental declamation. Without referring to them individually, I should like to call attention to the various realms of expression to which they belong. . . . Take the soldiers' songs: in addition to the high-spirited ones, like *Aus! Aus!* or *Trost im Unglück*, and the melancholy ones, like *Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz* and *Der Tambourgesell*, we find three songs in which the nocturnal element in Mahler's nature . . . speaks with the full force of that peculiar quality. *Der Schildwache Nachtlied* is one of the most outstanding compositions from that comparatively early period. . . . *Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen* is the most tender and heartfelt of the three, nocturnal, too, in its mood and moving in its ghostly ending. In the third, finally, the *Revelge*, we have a unique vision of the Mahler who felt himself kin to night and death. In the relentless marching, in the ghostlike coloring, and in the terrible intensity of feeling, we see a frightening manifestation of the demoniac nature of Mahler's soul.

"Again, we find a number of devout songs: filled with a simple and profound faith is the music of the *Urlicht*; quite different that of the *Himmlische Leben*, a song in which devoutness appears in the garments of childlike imagination, and that of the similarly conceived *Es sungen drei Engel*. Greatly characteristic of Mahler are the humorous songs: *Selbstgefühl*, *Ablösung im Sommer*, and *Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt*. The last, from which Mahler took the thematic material for the ingenious scherzo of the Second Symphony, is a masterpiece of original invention, powerful humorous expression, and compactness of form. The droll *Ablösung im Sommer* furnished the main theme for the scherzo of the Third. Beautiful and heart-felt folk songs are *Scheiden und Meiden*, and *Nicht Wiedersehen*; above all, however, the fourth *Lied eines fahrenden Gesellen*; 'Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz.' We find it again as the stirring central piece of the funeral march in the First. . . .

"After finishing the Fourth Symphony, Mahler turned from popular poetry

to its literary twin. He was attracted by Rückert's artistic mastery of the language, its profound veracity and simplicity being felt in a certain sense as a kindred trait. . . . Among them, *Ich atmet' einen Linden Duft* is a jewel of melodic poetry, *Um Mitternacht* the uplifting evidence of his firm trust in God, and *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen* deeply moving both as a song and as a most personal avowal of the soul. Common to all of these lyrics is their song-style. Even the most highly dramatic expression never led him to overstep the boundaries of the song-like."

Recommended recordings: *Ich atmet' einen Linden Duft*, C-17241D (Kullman); *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen*, C-4201M (Thorborg; Vienna Philharmonic—Walter).

## SYMPHONIES

Like Beethoven, Mahler sought to make the symphony a vehicle for poetic expression. In his symphonies, he was the last of the great romanticists who sought to embody in music a mystical sense of transcendent truth. More consciously than any other composer he sought to give an intellectual content to the symphonic form. Not program music was his aim (as he insisted again and again), but music rich with philosophic or metaphysical implications. Like Bruckner, he was possessed by a passion for greatness. In scope his symphonies were to transcend those written before. For he desired nothing less than to give musical voice to the "complete man."

He composed nine symphonies; a tenth was projected but never completed. Of these symphonies, the second was subtitled "The Resurrection"; the third was a Dionysian song, a pagan poem written with the pen of St. Francis; the fifth symphony is to death; the sixth, subtitled "Tragic," is an apostrophe to pessimism; the Eighth Symphony is to "eternal love."

### *Symphony No. 1 in D major*

The reception accorded to Mahler's First Symphony at its first performance on November 20, 1889, in Budapest was, in later years, to be duplicated again and again with his subsequent symphonies. The audience was by turns frigidly apathetic and actually hostile. The critics—of whom Herzfield was representative—were vitriolic. They could not understand Mahler's turbulent outpourings. Mahler had looked upon his symphony as "an adventure of the soul. . . . It issued from my heart like a mountain stream." To the audience and critics of the time it appeared overpretentious, pompous, windy. And so for many years to come: the more pretentious Mahler's aim in his symphonies, the more bitter the public reaction.

At the original performance of his D major Symphony, which he called "Titan," Mahler described the work as a "symphonic poem in two parts" (symphonic poems being in vogue at the time). His subtitles provide a clue to his intentions: Part I. "The Days of Youth. Youth, flowers, and thorns." Part II. "Human Comedy." The first part, Mahler subdivided into three

sections: (1) "Spring Without End"; (2) "A Chapter of Flowers"; (3) "Full Sail"

It is doubtful whether these subtitles will greatly help present-day audiences to an understanding of the symphony. Actually it is not programmatic. The first movement, marked *Langsam schleppend*, is a description of awakening Nature at the early hours of dawn. After a scherzo-like movement designated as *Kräftig bewegt* (an Austrian peasant dance) there comes a long funeral march, curiously Semitic in its thematic material, with more than a suggestion of vulgarity. The last movement, *Stürmisch bewegt*, used the fullest orchestral resources for alternating moods of nervous excitation and tranquility.

Recommended recording: CM-469 (Minneapolis Symphony—Mitropoulos).

### *Symphony No. 2 in D minor ("Resurrection")*

The second of Mahler's symphonies was composed in 1894. Three instrumental movements were introduced at a concert of the Berlin Philharmonic, conducted by Richard Strauss, on March 4, 1895. The audience rather liked some parts, particularly the second movement. But the critics—bent on destroying Mahler—described the concert as a complete fiasco and annihilated the work. Mahler himself directed the complete symphony in Berlin on December 13, 1895. The critics were as poisonous as before. One of them spoke of "the cynical impudence of this brutal and very latest music maker."

The symphony is in five movements. The first, *Allegro Maestoso*, opens with a momentous rumbling of discontent. Mahler is inquiring the "why" of human existence, probing for the meaning of human suffering. The answer does not come until the last movement, and is provided by Klopstock's verse entitled "The Resurrection":

*"Glaube, mein Herz,  
Es geht dir nichts verloren. . . .  
Sterben werd' ich um zu leben . . ."*

The first movement is a passionate exclamation, marked by solemnity and drama. Relief comes in the second movement (*Andante moderato*), a little folk song of rare buoyancy and charm. The third movement has a pastoral quality. In the fourth movement, a contralto solo is used—the verses being drawn from *Knaben Wunderhorn*. In the Finale, Klopstock's verses are sung by contralto and soprano solos with choral and orchestral accompaniment; the music (inspired by Hans von Bülow's funeral) rises to a climax of shattering power and grandeur—a reaffirmation of life.

Recommended recording: VM-256 (Minneapolis Symphony—Ormandy).

### *Symphony No. 9*

Mahler never heard his Ninth Symphony played. He began it in 1906, but it was not performed until June 1912 (under the direction of Bruno Walter), more than a year after the composer's death.

Bruno Walter finds a spiritual kinship between the Ninth Symphony and *Das Lied von der Erde*. "The title of its last canto, '*Der Abschied*' [farewell], might have been used as a heading for the Ninth. Born of the same mood, but without musical connection with *Das Lied*, and developed from his very own thematic material into a symphonic form which only he was able to create in his day, the first movement (Andante comodo) grew to be a tragically moving and noble paraphrase of the farewell feeling. A unique soaring between farewell sadness and a vision of heavenly light—not a soaring of the imagination but one of his essential emotions—lifts the movement into an atmosphere of celestial bliss. . . . The second movement (*Im Tempo eines gemächlichen Ländlers*), again in a new form of the intimately familiar scherzo . . . is remarkable for its great wealth of varying moods. A tragic undertone sounds in the joy, and one feels that 'the dance is over.' In the defiantly agitated third movement (Rondo; Burleske) Mahler once more furnishes most striking proof of his stupendous contrapuntal mastery. In the last movement (Adagio) he peacefully bids farewell to the world, the finale being like the melting of a cloud in the ethereal blue.

"In its conception, technique of movement, and polyphony, the Ninth continues the line of Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh symphonies, but it is backed by a most intensive spiritual agitation: the feeling of leave-taking. And while it, too, is pure orchestral music, it differs from the symphonies of the central group and comes nearer again to the earlier symphonies by the strong influence of so decidedly spiritual and fundamental a mood."

Recommended recording: VM-726 (Vienna Philharmonic—Walter).

## MALIPIERO

GIAN FRANCESCO MALIPIERO, descendant of an old Venetian family, b. Venice, 1882. Studied in Vienna, then with Bossi in Venice. In 1902, he discovered manuscripts of old Italian masters, the study of which was to exert a profound influence on his own creative growth. In 1913, he went to Paris for further study, and shortly before the first World War he settled in Asolo, near Venice, there to devote himself to creative work, to the editing of old Italian music, and (in Venice) to teaching.

IN *Twentieth Century Composers*, the editor of this volume analyzed Malipiero's style as follows: "The music of Malipiero can best be understood when his great preoccupation with old Italian music, poetry, and painting is recalled. He is not an Italian composer if by the term we mean the singableness of Puccini, Verdi, and Rossini. He is more dramatic than lyrical. He is also, frequently, more contrapuntal than homophonic—his contrapuntal writing



deriving its personality from the Gregorian chant. Essentially, his Italianism is much subtler and truer than that of Puccini or Rossini. It is the pure classical spirit of the Renaissance. . . . His music is, like all Italian music, permeated with lyricism; but it is a lyricism that has its own quality and flavor. Malipiero prefers a crisp melodic line of a swiftly moving pace which derives its dramatic character from the recitatives of Cavalli and Cavaliere. On the other hand, he prefers a recitative made more flexible by the freer use of melody. Thus there is frequently very slight difference between his recitatives and his melodies.

"Malipiero's music is essentially a dramatic expression—even when he abandons the opera for symphonic and chamber music. Frequently, it has the gleam of a mischievous wit and irony strongly reminiscent of the Italian operabouffe of a previous century. Occasionally, it assumes a philosophic pensiveness, a contemplative and introspective serenity. . . . The classical Renaissance tranquillity and spirituality which Malipiero has couched in forms of musical writing that are essentially modern in technique is his most personal speech, and the one by which he can most clearly be identified."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Impressioni dal Vero*

Malipiero's *Impressions from Nature* is in three parts: I. The Blackcap; II. The Woodpecker; III. The Owl. It was composed between 1913 and 1918, and was first performed in London on August 22, 1918.

Henri Prunières analyzed this work as follows: "The first movement evokes the song of the warbler, the rustling of the leaves, all the atmosphere of the woods in its autumnal morning. The second movement unfolds itself in a rapid movement. It is the forest 'en fête,' with the rays of the sun filtering through the branches, the fluttering of the birds in the trees, while the woodpecker with his powerful beak searches persistently in the mildewed trunks of the oaks. The third is a nocturne full of poetry and contemplation. The artist troubles himself little to reconstruct literally the sounds of the forest. He seeks to rouse in the mind of the listener the musical impression that he himself felt in listening to the confidences of the woods peopled with birds."

### *Pause del Silenzio*

Inspired by World War I, the tragedy of which affected the composer so profoundly that at one time he was afraid he was losing his mind, the *Pause del Silenzio* is one of the most moving of Malipiero's works. When it was introduced at the Augusteo in Rome on January 27, 1918, under the direction of Toscanini, one Italian commentator declared that the music represented "shudders, songs, cries, lamentations." Actually it is an expression of Malipiero's horror and suffering in the face of a world at war—music of high tensions. It consists of seven pieces, all different in character, but all

united by a single theme which appears and reappears to blend the various elements into a unity. The theme is heard in the very opening of the work—played by four horns in unison. The seven sections are: I. Melancholy Pastorale; II. Fantastic Scene; III. Strange Serenade; IV. A Sinister Ride; V. Funeral March; VI. Mysterious Calls; VII. Lugubrious Orgy.

## QUARTET

### *Rispetti e Strambotti*

It was this one-movement string quartet which first made Malipiero's name known to American music lovers. It won the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge award of \$1000 in an international chamber-music competition, and was introduced at the first festival held at Pittsfield, Massachusetts, under the auspices of Mrs. Coolidge, on September 25, 1920.

Rispetti and strambotti are two old Italian forms of poetry which Malipiero tried to recreate musically. The music consists of a series of scenes reflecting the Renaissance. At least two of the elements of Renaissance life are emphasized: the Church (a theme based on the plain chant) and the peasantry (sharp and decisive chords). Cadences and strophes of old Italian poetry give shape and contours to the melodic line. Compact, beautifully integrated, splendidly written for the strings, this one-movement quartet recreates old Italian flavors and colors in an idiom brilliantly modern.

Recommended recording: VM-397 (Kreiner Quartet).

## SYMPHONY

### *The Four Seasons*

Here Malipiero's style has been simplified. He uses simple lyric themes which are developed sparingly and bound together compactly, presenting the pictures of the four seasons directly and with few strokes of the pen. His orchestration (except in the last movement) is the last word in economy. The symphony was composed in 1933, and introduced at the festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music at Florence in April 1934. Actually it is not a symphony, but a suite of four tone poems, and it contains some of Malipiero's best descriptive writing.

Although Malipiero did not designate which season he had in mind for each movement, it can be assumed that the first movement—beginning with a pastoral passage for wood-wind alone—is Spring; the second, energetic and spirited, is Summer; the third, subdued and elegiac, Autumn; and the fourth, the only movement to use the full resources of the orchestra, is Winter.

# MARTINU

BOHUSLAV MARTINU, b. Politschka, Bohemia, 1890. After studying at the Prague Conservatory, he served for ten years as violinist with the Czech Philharmonic. In 1923 he went to Paris, where he became a pupil of Albert Roussel, remaining there until 1940. The musical atmosphere and culture of the French capital had a great influence on his creative evolution. In 1932 he won the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation Award for a string quartet, and, some years after that, the Czech State Prize and the Smetana Prize. Since 1941 he has made the United States his permanent home.

**T**wo predominating influences have shaped Martinu's artistic career. The first of these was Gallic—the impressionism of Debussy, the economy, rationalistic approach, and sensitivity of French musical writing. The second was Czech—music stemming from folk materials. Martinu absorbed these influences into his own artistic personality, frequently fused them, and created out of them a style and idiom of his own. Any examination of Martinu's characteristics as a composer soon reveals his predominant trait: clarity. The forms he uses are neat and precise. The thematic material is always stated forcefully, and with fine lucidity. Martinu has made a fetish of simplicity. He says what he has to say with directness, and as concisely as possible. He prefers harmonic structures that are almost primitive, a fluid and transparent counterpoint, the most elementary tone colors. Yet there is no poverty of expression. There is a great wealth of feeling and a fine, discerning intellect in all of his best works. Exceptional, too, is the integral unity of his music. His technique (of which he is a consummate master) and all the devices of musical form are made subservient to that unity and its straightforward statement.

Martinu's melodic writing has an individual character. His themes (brief, concise, sometimes even bare) become the germs of the full melodic idea. Unlike traditional composers, Martinu does not present his melody at once, fully conceived and projected. He merely gives a suggestion of it at first, then permits it to grow slowly and naturally throughout the length of his work until it finally emerges in its complete state. Martinu's writing has a clearly definable personality—no vagueness, no lack of spine. Its artistic purpose is easily recognizable, and it progresses towards that goal unfalteringly.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Concerto Grosso*

The *Concerto Grosso* has had a curiously dramatic history, victim as it was of the storm and stress of our times. It was composed in Paris in 1937 and was scheduled for publication and performance in Vienna in 1938. *Anschluss* put an end to this project, and in the political confusion that followed in Vienna one copy of the manuscript was lost. A scheduled performance of the work in Prague was also cancelled, this time because of the political conse-

quences of the Munich agreement. The première was now assigned to Paris for May 1940; but before that concert could take place, France fell. Martinu had to flee to America, leaving in Paris his second copy of the work. In America, however, he learned that the conductor George Szell had come upon still another copy in Prague, and had brought it with him to this country. Koussevitzky then accepted the work for the Boston Symphony Orchestra for early 1941. But even in America a strange fate pursued the composition: the copying of the manuscript proved so difficult that the first performance of the work had to be postponed. Eventually, however, the *Concerto Grosso* was heard in Boston, under Koussevitzky, on November 14, 1941.

Martinu's explanation of the work is as follows: "The title *Concerto Grosso* bespeaks my leaning toward this form which occupies a position between chamber music and symphonic music. . . . In the first movement, I work a little rhythmic germ of a half-measure which binds the different developments of the other motives and which appears in the most diversified forms up to the end, where there remains nothing but this little germ with full orchestra. The Andante of the second movement is an extended song by the 'cellos and the other strings, which continues forceful and expressive. But a few measures before the end, the song subsides into tranquillity. In the third movement, of lively character, the two pianos take the foremost place as soloists, setting forth the themes (somewhat rhythmic) of a rondo. At first they are enveloped always by the orchestra; then the orchestra takes them up, relegating the contrapuntal ornamentation to the pianos."

### *La Bagarre*

*La Bagarre* is one of the most successful of Martinu's earlier works, and the one that was responsible for his international reputation. Martinu has always been interested in the masses, their psychology, their movement, their vitality. In *La Bagarre* ("Tumult") he essays an orchestral description of a surging crowd, its irresistible force, its movement, dash, joy, power, confusion. "It is not descriptive music," explains the composer. "It is determined according to the laws of composition; it has a chief theme—as the human crowd has its theme of enthusiasm—which directs the movement." It is marked throughout by strong rhythmic elements which give to the work its elemental power and strength; but lyricism and polyphony are not sacrificed. *La Bagarre* was introduced by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, under Koussevitzky, on November 18, 1927.

## SYMPHONY

### *Symphony*

Martinu's First Symphony was commissioned by the Koussevitzky Music Foundation. Martinu began writing it in June 1942, completing it three months later. It was introduced in Boston on November 13, 1942.

"It follows the classical division in four parts," explains the composer. "I have also followed an aesthetic plan which my conviction dictates, and this conviction is that a work of art must not transcend the limits of its possibility in expression. . . . The basis of the orchestra is the quintet of strings, which does not prevent solo passages for the wood-winds, while the brass and the percussion fulfil their due part. I have tried to find new sound combinations and to elicit from the orchestra a unified sonority in spite of the polyphonic working which the score contains. It is not the sonority of impressionism, nor is there the search for color, which rather is integral in the writing and the formal structure. The character of this work is calm and lyric."

## MASCAGNI

PIETRO MASCAGNI, b. Livorno (Leghorn), Italy, 1863. Studied at the Luigi Cherubini Conservatory and later at the Conservatory in Milan. For several years he was conductor of a traveling opera company. In 1890 he emerged from obscurity with the performance of his one-act opera *Cavalleria Rusticana*. From 1895 to 1902 he was director of the Rossini Conservatory in Pesaro. In 1902 he toured the United States, conducting his own operas. In 1911 he toured South America. He was made a member of the Italian Academy in 1929.

**T**HOUGH Mascagni has composed such pleasing operas as *L'Amico Fritz* and *Iris*, he has never succeeded in duplicating the triumph of his first opera, *Cavalleria Rusticana*. To this day, it has remained his masterpiece, the one work that maintains his renown in the world of opera.

### OPERA

#### *Cavalleria Rusticana*

In one act, book by Targioni-Tozzetti and Menasci, première at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome on May 17, 1890.

In 1889, an unknown opera conductor submitted a one-act opera in a competition held by the Italian music publisher Sonzogno. This was the beginning of Pietro Mascagni's triumphant career, and of the worldwide fame of *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Winning first prize, *Cavalleria Rusticana* was introduced at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome in 1890, and created a sensation. Its composer had to take twenty curtain calls and the critics the next morning spoke of him as Verdi's successor.

Almost at once, opera houses throughout the world vied with one another to present this new one-act opera. Rarely had an opera aroused such interest and enthusiasm. In the United States, for example, there was actual com-

petition among various troupes to determine which one could first stage the opera. Gustav Hinrichs presented it in Philadelphia on September 9, 1891; a performance by another company followed in Chicago on September 30; two other companies put it on in New York on October 1; and on December 30, 1891, it entered the repertory of the Metropolitan Opera House. By 1895 there was hardly an opera house in the world that did not include *Cavalleria* in its repertoire.

One consequence of this success was a series of honors bestowed on Mascagni. He was, for example, made Knight of the Crown of Italy in 1890, and the town of Cerignola voted him an honorary citizen. So famous and important did he become that a new opera of his in 1901—*Le Maschere*—was produced simultaneously by seven of Italy's leading opera houses. He had, in short, become very much of a national idol.

One can well understand the success of *Cavalleria*. It combines excellent theater with (for the most part) a pleasing lyricism and a good feeling for the drama. As Streatfeild points out, the opera is not without faults. "The music is sometimes not original, sometimes commonplace, sometimes coarse." Yet it would be a mistake to overlook its many fine qualities. "The young composer has a copious stream of melody of his own to draw upon. . . . Besides his undoubted gift of melody, Mascagni has a very good idea of declamation. . . . Unequal as it is, *Cavalleria Rusticana* contains so much that is original . . . that it would be ungracious to begrudge it its overwhelming popularity."

The book is based on a tale by Giovanni Verga. Santuzza, a Sicilian girl, is betrayed by Turiddu, who refuses to marry her, preferring to pay court to Lola, wife of Alfio. At the village church, Turiddu cruelly spurns the pleading Santuzza, while Lola mocks her. To avenge herself, Santuzza—during Mass—tells Alfio about the affair between his wife and Turiddu; and Alfio kills Turiddu in a duel.

The most famous single number in the opera is the frequently heard Intermezzo, performed by the orchestra during the Mass. It has been said that this single piece has contributed more to the opera's great success than has all the rest of the music combined. However, there are other well-known excerpts: the "*Siciliana*" for tenor, interpolated in the Prelude and sung backstage; the soprano aria "*Voi lo sapete*"; the "*Viva il vino*" for tenor and chorus; and the tenor aria, "Turridu's Farewell."

Recommended recording: VM-98 (La Scala Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra—Molajoli).

# MASON

DANIEL GREGORY MASON, b. Brookline, Mass., 1873, the grandson of Lowell Mason (famous hymn-composer), nephew of William Mason (well-known pianist and teacher), and son of Henry Mason (founder of the Mason & Hamlin piano company). After completing academic studies at Harvard University, he studied music with Chadwick and Whiting, and in Paris with d'Indy. In 1914, he was appointed associate professor of music at Columbia University. After becoming full professor, he was appointed head of the music department at Columbia. Besides distinguishing himself as a teacher and composer, he has also had an important career as a writer on musical subjects, a post he held until 1941.

MASON believes implicitly in the direct expression in music of simple and unaffected emotions, unblemished by false sophistication and assumed smartness. He is not ashamed of being romantic, or of writing in the idioms and styles handed down to him by the musical past. He has a consummate mastery of his forms and his music is always marked by lucid thinking and good organization. Occasionally, there is a restraint in his expression of emotion or feelings—he avoids overstatement of any kind. He is a conservative composer, but he is not afraid of using modern devices when he feels that they will improve the music he is writing.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Chanticleer*

Mason's "festival overture" *Chanticleer* was introduced by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, under Reiner, on November 23, 1928. In explaining his work at that time, Mason wrote as follows: "*Chanticleer* bears as a motto the sentences Thoreau placed at the beginning of *Walden*: 'I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as Chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up.'"

"Over the first theme, based on the cry of the cock, given out by solo trumpet, the composer has placed the following sentences, also from *Walden*: 'All climate agrees with brave Chanticleer. He is more indigenous even than the natives. His health is ever good, his lungs are sound, his spirits never flag.' With this main theme are associated two others, one for wood-wind immediately following it, and one for four horns alone, both suggestive of the exuberant joy of man, responding to the joy of nature. After the return of the Chanticleer theme, in three trumpets with full orchestra, there is an abatement, until nothing but the pizzicato strings is left, and the rooster's better half is introduced by a solo bassoon (later two bassoons). The score at this point shows a quotation from Thoreau's *Winter*: 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, bless Him for wildness . . . and bless Him for hens, too, that croak and cackle in the yard.' The final theme is again one of human exuberance, for full orchestra, though based melodically on the hen theme. A short mid-

dle section is given over to the quieter mood (muted strings and solo horn). Is the summer afternoon a little sultry, does the barnyard drowse for a moment? If so, cooler evening airs quickly revive the mood of animation, and at the end, Chanticleer pronounces the universe a good one."

### *Prelude and Fugue*

This comparatively early work by Mason—it was composed in 1921, and introduced in that year by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Stock—has been frequently performed by leading symphony orchestras. Written for piano and orchestra, it was dedicated to the well-known American pianist, John Powell, who introduced it in Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, and New York. In John Tasker Howard's analysis of the composition: "The Prelude opens dramatically with a foreboding unison motive in the orchestra, answered by a nostalgic, yearning theme in the piano part. The piece is marked throughout by dignity and brilliance, and reaches a powerful climax as it comes to the Fugue. Here the subject is announced first by the piano, in mysterious and tragic mood. The development is based largely on chromatic progressions which bring to it moments of lyric, transparent beauty. The culmination is reached in the final maestoso passage, where the themes of Prelude and Fugue are combined in a triumphant finish."

## SYMPHONY

### *A Lincoln Symphony*

This, the third of Mason's symphonies, was introduced by the New York Philharmonic-Symphony under John Barbirolli on November 17, 1937. It is in four movements. The first, entitled "The Candidate from Springfield," is based on a melody popular in the 1860s, *Quaboag*. The second movement, "Massa Linkum," presents a musical expression of the Negroes' opinion of Lincoln—a poignant theme for English horn, in imitation of a Spiritual, descriptive of the Negro's sufferings. "Old Abe's Yarns," the third movement, is of a lusty, peasant humor in which we sense the "relief . . . he [Lincoln] found in his grotesque, irresponsible, half-demoniac humor." The last movement, "1865," is, of course, a threnody to Lincoln: "The quickstep we once marched with him in triumph has turned to a funeral march in our tragic hearts."

The music, as Lawrence Gilman pointed out in his criticism of the work, has "the lofty simplicity, the noble austerity and plainness, that were essential strands in the complex fabric of Lincoln's soul. It is terse, compact, succinct, saying its say with concentration and most skilled economy of means—never excessive, never overwrought; leading by an extraordinary subtlety and interplay of contrasts to the impassioned sorrow of the final movement—that dirge in which a musician of today pays worthy tribute to a deathless spirit."



# MASSENET

JULES MASSENET, b. Montaud, near St. Etienne, 1842. Was a student at the Paris Conservatory, where he won the Prix de Rome. Upon his return from Rome, he composed his first opera—*La Grand' tante*—which was performed at the Opéra-Comique in 1867. His first successful work was an oratorio, which, followed by his incidental music to *Les Erynnies* (which includes the famous *Elégie*), established his fame in France. In 1878, he was elected to the Académie des Beaux-Arts and was appointed professor of composition at the Paris Conservatory. Between 1880 and 1890, he reached the peak of his fame as a composer with the operas *Hérodiade*, *Manon*, *Werther*, and *Thais*. After 1900 there set in a marked disintegration of his genius. He died in Paris in 1912.

ALTHOUGH Massenet composed a great amount of orchestral and choral music, his fame rests exclusively on his operas, which have immeasurably enriched the French repertory. It is singularly appropriate that his best work should have been done in the nineteenth century, that his retrogression as a creative artist should have begun as that century closed. For Massenet was essentially a son of the nineteenth century; twentieth-century realism was not for him. He was the romantic, detached from life's realities. Whatever he touched—at any rate in his most successful operas—was transformed into poetry. His vein of tenderness was contrasted with striking passion and intensity of feeling. He was master of many different moods and emotions, and conveyed them in music that is suave and polished in the best French tradition. It would be a mistake, however, to think that he was not concerned with good theater; in all his best operas, his music has sound dramatic qualities which highlight the action on the stage and give it a more poignant meaning. But Massenet's chief goal as a composer of opera was to enchant his listeners with fluid music.

## OPERAS

### *Manon*

In five acts, book by Henri Meilhac and Philippe Gille, introduced at the Opéra-Comique on January 19, 1884.

*Manon* was Massenet's most formidable success, and to this very day it has remained one of his best-loved operas. It has seen more than 1700 performances at the Opéra-Comique, and in the other opera houses of the world it is frequently heard as representative of the best traditions of French opera. Romantic, tender, poignant, dramatic, it has won a permanent place in the hearts of opera lovers, and promises to hold that place as long as grand opera remains a living and vibrant form of musical entertainment.

In this opera, more than any other, Massenet is—as Louis Schneider wrote of him—"the musician of Woman and Love. Love he sang of in every possible form—mystic or carnal, idealistic or romantic; he even submitted it to the caprices of fashion." With remarkable success he brought to the opera

the poignancy and ecstasy of Abbé Prevost's famous romance, and through his music he recreated the character of the heroine, her passionate love affair, and her tragedy.

The story of *Manon* is well known, being not only one of the classics in French romantic literature but also the source of inspiration for Puccini and Halévy, besides Massenet. It concerns the tragic fate of Manon Lescaut. On her way to a convent, she meets, falls in love with, and elopes with the dashing Chevalier des Grieux. They escape to Paris. Grieux's father arranges to abduct his son in order to break up their affair, and Manon now becomes the mistress of Grieux's cousin (in the original novel, he is Grieux's brother). Hearing that Grieux is at the seminary of St. Sulpice about to take holy orders, she rushes to the church and there prevails upon Grieux to abandon the project and to flee with her. Grieux becomes a gambler and is accused of cheating, with Manon as his accomplice. He is released through his father's influence, but Manon is to be deported to America. At Le Havre, Grieux waits for her, hoping to effect her escape. But he finds that he has come too late: Manon is ill—and she dies in his arms.

The famous arias from *Manon* include the soprano aria from Act II, "*Adieu, notre petite table*," the aria for tenor in the same act, "*Le Rêve*," the soprano aria, "*Profitions bien de la jeunesse*," and the tenor aria, "*Ah! fuyez, douce image*," both from Act III.

Recommended recording: CM Opera 10 (*Opéra-Comique*, soloists, chorus, and orchestra—Cohen).

### *Thaïs*

In three acts, book by Louis Gallet, première at the Paris Opéra on March 16, 1894.

When *Thaïs* was first performed, it was not well received. Its delicate atmospheric colors, its exquisite poetic feeling, its tender beauty, could not be fully appreciated on first contact. It was only after the opera had been heard many times—and after it had acquired the additional glamour of performances by stars like Mary Garden and Maurice Renaud—that it began to acquire public favor. If *Thaïs* is not melodically so seductive as *Manon*, it has a beauty of its own, subtly elusive until one has acquired intimacy with it. It is only after repeated hearings that one realizes that it has mined a deeper and richer vein than any of Massenet's other operas, and that it is here that his artistry reached its highest altitudes.

This is, of course, the famous heroine of Anatole France's novel by the same name—the courtesan of Alexandria as famous for her beauty as for her vices. Athanael, himself once a roué but now a monk devoted to religion, is bent upon converting Thaïs to the good life of the spirit. She falls in love with him and, because of her love, yields to his wish that she go with him to a convent, where she will be admitted into the White Sisterhood. Meanwhile, Athanael—now in love with her—feels the call of the flesh, and is tortured by it. In his desert retreat, he has a vision

that Thaïs is dying in the convent. He rushes to her, falls at her side in anguish, to hear from her dying lips that she has seen the Almighty.

In this opera Massenet reveals two personal notes prevalent in most of his best operas, as pointed out by Edouard Schuré: "On the one hand, an intriguing tenderness which rises at times to passion; on the other hand, a penetrating melancholy, singularly incisive."

The most famous single number in the opera is the "Meditation"—an intermezzo for solo violin and orchestra—performed in Act II to describe the transformation of Thaïs from a lustful courtesan to the religion-inspired disciple of Athanaël. The refrain of the "Meditation" is repeated in Act III to accompany Thaïs's death. Well-known too are the soprano arias "*Dis-moi que je suis belle*," and "*L'amour est une vertu rare*," both from Act II.

Recommended recordings: "*Dis-moi que je suis belle*," V14153 (Jepson); "Meditation," Victor 11887 (Jepson; Boston Pops Orchestra); "Death of Thaïs," V6578 (Lewis).

## McDONALD

HARL McDONALD, b. Boulder, Colorado, 1899. Completed academic and music studies at the University of Southern California, at Redlands University, California, and at the Leipzig Conservatory. For two years he taught music at the Philadelphia Musical Academy, and for some years after that at the University of Pennsylvania where, in 1931, he was appointed head of the music department. In 1939 he was appointed business manager of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Besides his career as a teacher and composer, he has also earned honors as a conductor.

It is not easy to classify McDonald as a composer, for his music abounds in different styles and idioms. He can be emotional and poetic, or cacophonous, or impressionistic—depending on the message he is trying to convey. Whatever he has written bears the stamp of sound musicianship and sincerity—these, with a creative imagination that is rich and a talent of a high order.

### SYMPHONIES

#### *Symphony No. 1 ("The Sante Fé Trail")*

For this engaging and authentically American work, which was first introduced by the Philadelphia Orchestra in November 1934, the composer provided the following programmatic interpretation: "As a small boy in the Southwest, I heard many of the old men describe their experiences in the early days when they came to the new country. . . . With few words and long periods of silence, they painted pictures so vivid that they must remain

clear in my mind as long as I live. My purpose in my symphony was to recreate in tone something of the spirit and experience of these pioneers.

"I have called the first movement 'The Explorers.' Across the face of the great plain of infinite sweep moves a group of tiny figures. Surveyed from a distance, one would hardly be conscious that they move at all, so slight is their advance from day to day. . . . An exclamation focuses every unbelieving eye upon the dim outline of distant mountains, and weeks of weary plodding are forgotten in the new impatience to reach the Spanish settlements. The excitement is climaxed when they reach the crest of the first range, and gaze in ecstasy at the panorama which is unfolded before them.

"This movement opens *molto andante* (the Desert) and leads to an *allegro risoluto* (the mountains and rejuvenated hopes), becoming again *molto adagio*.

"My second movement (an *allegro scherzando*, with a trio, of Hispanic-Jota patterns) reflects the spirit of the life in the Spanish settlements where the explorers encounter a kind of life which is beyond their comprehension. At first these cold men of the North and East are only dimly aware of the gaiety and indolence of the Hispanic life, but soon it becomes the pulse of their existence. . . . The original burst of ecstasy which the pioneers experienced on first viewing this land becomes a more substantial love of country.

"The third movement, *Allegro moderato e vigorosamente*, is built on several subjects, and represents the many influences—Hispanic, Nordic, and American-Indian—that combined to form the spirit and substance of the Southwest. I have carried to completion here the principal subject of the first movement; and while there is a considerable interplay of thematic material in the three movements, I have given more thought to the sequence of emotional states than to any purely technical devices of structure."

Recommended recording: VM-754 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy).

### *Symphony No. 2 ("Rhumba")*

McDonald's second symphony followed the first by one year, and was introduced by the Philadelphia Orchestra in October 1935. It is called the *Rhumba* Symphony because of its third movement, a rhumba.

The work consists of "reflections on an era of turmoil inspired by the unrest and contradictions of our times," explains the composer. "In the midst of effortless production I came face to face with breadlines, hunger, labor strife, and the final intervention of the federal government."

There is bitterness in much of the work, and ecstasy in other parts. It is an expression of "an age that has an almost insatiable appetite for gaiety and entertainment." The first movement consists of a grave introduction followed by a frenetic *Allegro*, suggesting the tensions of the times. The *Andante* movement relieves the high pressure and is a sober and melancholy reflection on the part of the composer. The rhumba movement, in its gaiety and abandon, interprets the spirit of recklessness of the period, its passionate search after good times and diversion, its pursuit of intoxicated pleasures.

The Finale represents the marching of soldiers and is rather macabre in mood; the composer reviews them, and as he looks into their faces he realizes that they are the faces of the dead.

## MEDTNER

NIKOLAI MEDTNER, b. Moscow, 1879. Studied with Safonov at the Moscow Conservatory. In 1896 he published his first works, and in 1900 he graduated from the Conservatory with highest honors. After successful concert work as pianist, he became, in 1909, professor of piano at the Moscow Conservatory. In 1910 he resigned his teaching post to devote himself to composition. He left Russia in 1921, and eventually settled in London.

### PIANO MUSIC

MEDTNER's importance as a composer rests exclusively on his works for the piano, which form a formidable library of piano pieces in many different forms. He is sometimes spoken of as the "Russian Brahms." "His art," explains Sidney Miller, "is similarly rooted firmly in the past; he has the same artistic integrity as Brahms; the same touch of austerity and aversion from frippery and display, and also the same contrapuntal skill."

Medtner's best works for the piano include his Sonatas (of which the most celebrated are the G minor, Op. 22; the E minor, Op. 25, No. 2; and the A minor, Op. 30); *Three Arabesques*, Op. 7; *Three Novellen*, Op. 17; *Improvisations*, Op. 31, No. 1; *Vergessene*, Opp. 38, 39, 40; *Märchen*, Opp. 26, 42; and *Fairy Tales*, Opp. 20, 26, 34, 51.

In an analysis of Medtner, Alfred J. Swan has written: "His style is firm, rigid, somewhat uncouth; his thought concentrated . . . severe, ascetic, graphical rather than steeped in color, yet of haunting beauty and transparent purity; his rhythm invariably striking and characteristic. He will not swerve an inch from his chosen path; he is possessed of the ardor of a musical fanatic who sees his goal and strives for it regardless of all side-issues. The influences that have been at play in the formation of this fine artist can be traced easily. Schumann is undoubtedly Medtner's spiritual ancestor, though his severity and austerity hail from Brahms."

And Watson Lyle has pointed out that Medtner "loves melody, in which his song-like inspiration has the facility of Chopin . . . and savor as well. He freely employs chromaticism, but is no slave to it; nor indeed to any manner of writing but that which will, for the time being, let him express sensitively the emotion and the thought back of his material. Reading through his music

from the earliest to the latest works, this urge of his to convey the tone color, the atmosphere, sensed at the conception of each piece, reveals itself as the unifying principle of his art."

It is Leonid Sabaneyev's opinion that Medtner's creative work is best represented by his sets of *Fairy Tales*. "A type of composition invented by him and partly similar to the old romantic form of the Ballad, Medtner's *Fairy Tales* unquestionably belong not only to the best in his creative work, but to the production of romantic inspiration in general. But Medtner's romanticism is peculiar. It is not the romanticism of enchantment, but rather the romanticism of the grotesque. Medtner's fantastic world of his *Fairy Tales* is not the world of elves and witchery, but the poetry of ancient heroic legends, and most of all an echo of the underworld of Nibelungs, gnomes, and mountain kings. . . . It has no brightness or radiance, but dusk and darkness. Occasionally it has ominousness, and a certain closeness. In his *Fairy Tales*, Medtner is neither heavenly nor ethereal, nor in the clouds, but earthly, even earthy, subterranean."

Recommended recording: "Twelve Piano Pieces" (including *Arabesque*, Op. 7, No. 3; *Fairy Tales*, from Opp. 20, 26, 34, 51, *Novelle*, Op. 17, No. 1, *Danza Festiva*, Op. 36, No. 3, and *Danza Jubilosa*, Op. 40, No. 4), VM-384 (Medtner).

## SONGS

Though Medtner is at his greatest in his piano music, his talent as a composer of songs should not be underestimated. "He continues," wrote Sabaneyev, "the serious tradition of Brahms's vocal music. His songs are generally written to texts by Russian and German authors (Pushkin, Tyutchev, Fet, Goethe, Nietzsche). The fundamental color of his work is its intensely philosophical quality. . . . Without external brilliance or colored vestments, the music makes a direct appeal to what is profoundest and most intimate in the man. His supreme attainments—they border on genius—in the sphere of the song are *Bezsonnitsa* and *Zaklinanie* to words of Tyutchev and Pushkin respectively."

# MENDELSSOHN

FELIX MENDELSSOHN, b. Hamburg, 1809. Studied with Berger and Zelter, making successful appearances as a child prodigy of the piano. He was also precocious as a composer, writing sonatas, songs, cantatas, organ works, and even a symphony before his sixteenth birthday. At seventeen, he produced his first masterpiece, the Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In 1829, he conducted a performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in Berlin—the first since Bach's day—which was instrumental in bringing the then neglected composer to world fame. In the same year, too, began his long and rich association with England. In 1833, Mendelssohn became music director in Düsseldorf, and in 1835 he was appointed conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. Eight years later, with Schumann and Ferdinand David, he helped to found the Leipzig Conservatory of Music. Dividing his time among conducting, teaching, and composing, he overtaxed himself to a point of physical collapse. He died in Leipzig in 1847.

It is not difficult to build a case against Mendelssohn; as a matter of fact it was for a long time the fashion to depreciate his importance. He was never profound; he never felt emotions deeply; his music, too often, had little more than surface charm. He was, most assuredly, no Bach or Beethoven. Yet if we examine his best music, we recognize that Mendelssohn had a magic of his own that makes him ever lovable and ingratiating. He had immaculate taste and refinement; even in his lesser works there is evident the hand of a true artist. His forms—of a classical character—are lucid and beautifully fashioned. Grace, an exquisitely sensitive touch, and a unique delicacy are evident in everything he wrote.

He had many admirable gifts, and they should not be underestimated. For one thing, he was a master in painting landscapes in music. Then, too, he was incomparable in the writing of light, airy music: "Many of his scherzos," in the words of Hugo Leichtentritt, "have a delightfully fantastic play of the most delicate tones, suggestive of a dance of spirits that float in the air like clouds, soaring lightly in most graceful undulations, hardly touching the ground with their nimble feet, wrapped in veils, like clouds or smoke mounting toward the sky." Finally, he had a copious, a seemingly inexhaustible, supply of enchanting melodies; a beautiful lyricism flows through his best works, mobile, graceful, seductive.

Frederick H. Cowen has thus summed up the distinguishing qualities of Mendelssohn's music: "Extreme grace and refinement and musically scholarship, at times full of sparkling vivacity, at others tinged with melancholy. If he had comparatively few really great moments, so are there few traces of absolute weakness as may often be found in the lesser works of Mozart and other composers. . . . He possessed a strongly marked style and individuality. . . . He possessed, in addition, a gaiety and animation, a *joie de vivre*, which were the outcome of his happy and lighthearted nature."

If his sphere was comparatively limited, at least he was a monarch in it. Or, as Frederic H. Cowen put it, "if Mendelssohn did not rise up to the greatest

heights, he came within measurable distance of them. His music bears the stamp of his cultured mind, and his high level of excellence is undeniable."

## CONCERTOS

### Piano Concerto

#### *Concerto in G minor*

Mendelssohn himself said of his First Piano Concerto, Op. 25, that it was "a thing rapidly thrown off." It is, truth to tell, slight music, surprisingly impoverished in its melodic ideas, meretriciously written for the piano, and throughout much too well-mannered for its own good. If it still enjoys some measure of popularity it is only because it is written with artistry and finesse. The craftsmanship is there, even if the inspiration is lacking. The first movement sets forth two contrasting moods: the first, stormy, and artificial in its drama, is heard at the very beginning in the orchestra, then in the solo piano, then in both; the second (the principal theme of the movement) is tranquil and tender, introduced by the solo piano. The second movement is a gentle melody, faintly reminiscent of the Nocturne from the *Midsummer Night's Dream* suite, voiced by violas and 'cellos; it is pleasant music, but hardly likely to stir the listener profoundly. The last movement strives at grandeur but is generally blatant and pompous. The entire concerto is played without interruption.

Mendelssohn composed the concerto in 1830, and introduced it himself in Munich on October 17, 1831.

Recommended recording: VM-780 (Sanromá; Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler).

### Violin Concerto

#### *Concerto in E minor*

The eminent violinist Ferdinand David was the inspiration for Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, Op. 64—one of the most famous and popular of all violin concertos. As early as 1838, David urged Mendelssohn to compose a concerto for him. "It is nice of you to urge me," Mendelssohn replied. "I have the liveliest desire to write one for you, and if I have a few propitious days here I'll bring you something. But the task is not an easy one. You demand that it should be brilliant, and how is such a one as I to do this? The whole of the first solo is to be for the E string!" The concerto, however, was not written until 1844, following which—profiting by David's advice and criticism—the composer subjected it to intensive revision. Finally on March 13, 1845, it was introduced at a concert in Leipzig by the Gewandhaus Orchestra. Neils Gade was the conductor, and David the soloist.

The concerto abounds with the purest and most felicitous Mendelssohnian lyricism. Into few other compositions did he pour such a wealth of thematic material, and with such a profuse hand. Profound, the work certainly is not, but it maintains a consistent level of beauty which never seems to fail to



touch the heart or to enchant the listener. After an orchestral prelude of one bar, the solo violin announces a passionate subject. A countersubject is then provided both by the orchestra and the soloist. The second principal theme of the movement is an eloquent melody played by the flutes and clarinets, while the solo violin plays a sustained low G. This material is lavishly developed, often with magical writing for the violin. The second movement, *Andante*, opens with an eight-bar prelude, following which the solo violin is heard in one of Mendelssohn's most poignant melodies—music of such serenity and calm that it seems to come from another world. Some measure of contrast is provided in the movement by an agitated second subject, introduced by the orchestra. A brief transition carries the second movement into the brilliant close of the concerto, *Allegretto non troppo*, music that is impetuous, full of dash and verve, gay and sprightly in Mendelssohn's best capricious vein.

Recommended recording: VM-531 (Menuhin; Colonne Orchestra—Enesco).

## ORATORIO

### *Elijah*

In 1845, the management of the Birmingham Festival in England (at which, eight years earlier, Mendelssohn had achieved great success with his oratorio *St. Paul*) invited Mendelssohn to write a new oratorio. For many years he had aspired to write an oratorio about Elijah, and it was now the Birmingham request that was to serve as the compelling force to bring his long-held project to completion.

*Elijah*, Op. 70, was introduced at the Birmingham Festival on August 26, 1846, under the composer's direction. "No work of mine ever went so admirably at the first performance, or was received with such enthusiasm both by musicians and the public as this." Eight of the numbers were encored, and when the concert was over the composer was mobbed by his adoring public.

The oratorio opens with Elijah's prophecy of the coming of the drought, and carries the prophet through his miraculous resurrection of the widow's son, and the bringing of the rain, through the persecution of Elijah by Jezebel, the prophet's sojourn in the desert, and, finally, his ascent to heaven in a chariot of fire.

For this oratorio, Mendelssohn wrote music that alternates between mid-Victorian stuffiness and lyric eloquence, between stilted artificiality and dramatic cogency. It is an uneven work, but its best pages are among the greatest he ever wrote, and more than compensate for the lesser ones.

Despite some of its beautiful arias, *Elijah* is essentially more dramatic than lyric. Mendelssohn had intended it that way. "It appears to me that the dramatic should predominate—the personages should be introduced as acting and speaking with fervor; not however . . . to become mere musical pictures, but inhabitants of a positive practical world."

"It is this human element," comments Cowen, "coupled of course with the highly appropriate setting it inspired, that has given the oratorio so great a hold on the musical world, and it is just in those scenes which so vividly illustrate the stirring episodes of this old Biblical drama that the music rises to its greatest heights."

The great pages in the oratorio include the following arias: for tenor, "If With All Your Hearts"; for bass, "Lord God of Abraham"; for soprano, "Hear Ye, Israel!"; for alto, "O rest in the Lord"; and for tenor, "Then Shall the Righteous Shine."

Recommended recording: C-Album 15 (Soloists, B.B.C. Chorus and Orchestra—Robinson).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Fingal's Cave Overture*

The overture *Fingal's Cave*, Op. 26—sometimes known as the Hebrides Overture—was inspired by a walking trip that Mendelssohn and his friend Klingemann took in the Scottish Highlands. Its opening theme occurred to him during his visit to the famous caves at Staffa. "You may understand how extraordinarily the Hebrides affected me," Mendelssohn wrote from Scotland. "The following [the first ten bars of the overture] came into my mind." "In the evening," recalled Ferdinand Hiller, "he [Mendelssohn] was making a visit with his friend Klingemann to a Scottish family. There was a piano in the room; but it was Sunday, and there was no possibility of music. He exercised all his diplomacy to get at the piano for a moment. When he had succeeded, he dashed off the theme out of which the great work grew."

The theme in question, which opens the overture, aptly describes the roll of the ocean waves to the shore at the mouth of the cave. On this theme, and a second one that is beautifully lyrical, Mendelssohn builds the entire overture, which is one of his happiest landscape paintings. As Hugo Leichtentritt wrote: "Certainly it gives a wonderfully vivid impression of the surging sea, of waves resounding in rocky caves, of the harsh cry of the sea gulls, the odor of the salt air, the sharp flavor of the seaweed, and the melancholy soul of this northern scene. What a masterpiece of romantic imagination and romantic tone painting!"

The Overture was composed in 1831–32, and was introduced by the London Philharmonic, Thomas Attwood conducting, on May 14, 1832.

Recommended recording: V-11886 (B.B.C. Symphony—Boult).

### *A Midsummer Night's Dream:*

"Overture"; "Nocturne"; "Scherzo";  
"Wedding March."

That a boy of seventeen should have written so completely realized a masterpiece as the *Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Op. 21, is one of

the phenomena of musical history. The music is so beautifully integrated, so skilfully woven in a single texture, that there is not one bar that seems superfluous, not one phrase that we should want to revise, not one mood that is not precisely established. Elfin in the delicacy of its atmosphere, diaphanous in its instrumentation, full of the subtlest tints and hues, touched with an almost effeminate grace and gentleness, buoyant in its spirit, the Overture is not only a remarkable interpretation of the spirit of the Shakespeare comedy but also a mirror of the composer's own personality.

In 1826, when Felix and his sister Fanny were reading Shakespeare's comedy together, it made such an impression on the young musician that he decided to write a piece of music about it. The piano duet that resulted was first played privately by the two young people; and it pleased Felix so well that he decided to orchestrate it in the form of an overture. In the beautiful and serene setting of the garden at his family's Berlin home, Mendelssohn introduced his overture to a small audience. And, in February 1827, he conducted its first public performance in Stettin.

With this one work, a thus far immature composer (among his earlier works only the Scherzo of his Octet had suggested his latent powers) steps unflinching to greatness. A mere boy, guided only by instinct and taste, then passed from experimentation to fulfillment.

In their excellent description of this music, Brockway and Weinstock wrote: "After a few evocative chords, it opens with a rippling staccato figure that instantly sets the scene in Fairyland, and for the most obvious of reasons—no mortal could dance to this aerial rhythm. Momentarily the dance is interrupted by a sweetly dissonant chord, there is a hint of hurly-burly, and we hear the horns of Duke Theseus. He and his train pass by; the dancers resume, only to be crowded from the scene by the mortal lovers. With nice calculation, Mendelssohn has given these young people a more earthbound theme, a broadly romantic melody of Weberian character that not only affords a telling musical contrast, but also beautifully points up their muddled loves. What can be more natural at this point than to introduce a reference to Bottom and the other clownish actors by a rustic dance with the veriest hint of peasant buskins? The rest of the overture is made up of recapitulation and development of these themes. All is exquisitely designed, thought out with flawless logic, and reverently adapted to the spirit of Shakespeare's play. The harmonies throughout are bold without being obtrusive."

In 1843, seventeen years after Mendelssohn composed this Overture, King Frederick William of Prussia commissioned him to compose music for a projected performance of the Shakespeare comedy at his new theater in Potsdam on October 14 of that year. Up to this time, Mendelssohn had written only the Overture. Now, inspired by the new commission, he wrote thirteen additional numbers (Op. 61a). Of these, three have since then become famous, and are included with the Overture in performances of Mendelssohn's incidental music to the play. The Nocturne is a beautiful song for the horn, in-

tended for the closing of Act III when sleep descends upon all. The Scherzo recaptures the fairy atmosphere and elfin grace of the Overture; it is a tone picture of Fairyland, and was written as a prelude to Act II. Finally, there is the Wedding March, which has since become one of the two most popular wedding marches (the other, of course, being that of Wagner).

Recommended recording: suite, CM-504 (Cleveland Orchestra—Rodzinski).

### *Ruy Blas Overture*

Mendelssohn's *Ruy Blas*, Op. 95, was written for the well-known Victor Hugo drama depicting the court of Charles III of Spain. "The philosophical motive of *Ruy Blas*," said Hugo, "is a people aspiring to a higher state; the human subject is a man who loves a woman; the dramatic interest is a lackey who loves a queen." The overture, which Mendelssohn composed in 1839 and which was first performed that year in Leipzig at a benefit concert, seeks to highlight the mood of the entire play. It opens majestically with brass and wood-wind, following which the violins pronounce an impetuous and dramatic subject. The chief theme of the movement is then heard in the strings. The second theme of the movement is heard staccato, above which soars a beautiful melody for first violins and bassoons.

Recommended recording: V-11791 (B.B.C. Symphony—Boult).

## PIANO MUSIC

While Mendelssohn confessed that he did not write his piano pieces with any degree of pleasure and suspected that they were not among his successful works, they reveal, at their best, no sign of labor or self-consciousness. He wrote for the piano, as he wrote for every other instrument, easily and spontaneously. He was a fine pianist himself, and knew intimately the instrument for which he was writing.

### *Prelude and Fugue in E minor*

This composition appears in a volume entitled *Six Preludes and Fugues*, Op. 35. "The prelude," explains Albert E. Wier, "is broadly conceived, and has real power of expression; the fugue is a masterpiece in the form, revealing Mendelssohn's great knowledge of the science of music. There is a clever inversion of the theme and a lofty chorale treatment just before the close."

### *Rondo Capriccioso*

This little masterpiece—one of the greatest of Mendelssohn's works for the piano—is spiritual brother to the Scherzo from the Octet and to that from the *Midsummer Night's Dream* pieces. It is in two contrasting sections. The first, a broadly lyrical Andante, is Mendelssohn magic at its most beguiling; it is tender, wistful, poignant. In the second section (Rondo) Mendels-

sohn's pen leaps. Here the music dances nimbly on elfin feet; we are transported into the world of fairies and forests and spells and enchantments.

Recommended recording: V-1651 (Levitzi).

### *Songs Without Words*

Mendelssohn composed eight volumes of *Songs Without Words*: Op. 19 (1830), Op. 30 (1833), Op. 38 (1836), Op. 53 (1841), Op. 62 (1842), Op. 67 (1844), Op. 85 (1841-45), Op. 102 (1842-45).

Originally entitled by Mendelssohn "Melodies for the Piano," the first set was composed as a birthday present for his beloved sister Fanny; at the same time he created an altogether new *genre* of piano composition. The *Songs Without Words* are, as their name implies, lyrical pieces of an almost vocal character; here the piano is made to sing. They are, wrote Carl Engel, "really sketches of a traveler, written for the delectation of those who had stayed at home. They may have the slightness of such sketches, but they also have the vividness of indelible impressions made on a sensitive and cultured mind, and are drawn with infinite charm and grace."

The best of the *Songs Without Words* are the following: "Hunting Song," Op. 19, No. 3; "Venetian Gondola Song," Op. 19, Op. 30, and Op. 62; "Consolation," Op. 30, No. 3; the popular "Spring Song," Op. 62, No. 6; and the equally famous "Spinning Song," Op. 67, No. 4.

Recommended recordings: *Thirteen Songs Without Words*, VM-226 (K. U. Schnabel); *Nine Songs Without Words*, C-DB454-7 (Friedman).

### *Variations sérieuses*

"Do you know," wrote Mendelssohn to Klingemann on July 15, 1841, "what I have recently been composing with enthusiasm? Variations for the piano—actually eighteen on a theme in D minor." This work is one of the finest that Mendelssohn wrote for the piano. The theme is an elegiac one, beautifully stated for the piano, touching in its wistful accents of a curbed sorrow. The series of variations that follow transform the theme into many different shapes and forms, and make it expressive of many varied moods and nuances. Suavely written, frequently with brilliant effects for the keyboard, the Variations carry deep conviction.

Recommended recording: V-15173-4 (Cortot).

## QUARTET

### *Quartet in E-flat major*

Though this quartet was composed in 1829, when Mendelssohn was only twenty, it has none of the marks of a 'prentice hand. It opens with a somewhat religious Adagio patterned after Beethoven's *Harp* Quartet. After seven

bars comes the Allegro non tardante which exploits two excellent thematic subjects: the first eloquently expressive, with passionate accents, the second tender and peaceful. The second movement, Canzonetta, is one of the most famous in all Mendelssohn's chamber works—a playful melody, whose piquancy is achieved through staccati and pizzicati. The third movement, Andante espressivo, is broadly lyrical and (as with the opening of the quartet) with religious overtones. The entire movement has a humility that is at moments deeply moving. Without interruption, the Finale (Molto allegro e vivace) comes to relieve the serenity with bursts of jubilant gaiety.

Recommended recording: VM-307 (Budapest String Quartet).

## SYMPHONIES

### *Italian Symphony*

The finest and most popular of Mendelssohn's symphonies—the Fourth, in A major, Op. 90—was composed in 1833 in Berlin as the result of a trip to Italy which he had taken two years earlier. On May 13, 1833, the symphony was introduced by the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by the composer. Though at first it pleased Mendelssohn, he began to revise it a year after its première, completing his drastic corrections and rewriting two years after that. The revised symphony was first heard at a concert by the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, under Julius Rietz, on November 1, 1849.

The Italianate part of the symphony is the last movement, Saltarello, which (as its name implies) incorporates a famous Italian dance. Except for this, there is not much of Italy in the symphony, unless we wish to interpret the buoyant good spirits of the opening movement as a reflection of Mendelssohn's joy in seeing Italy, or the heart-warming slow movement as suggesting spring under a cloudless Italian sky. The exuberance of the first movement, and the soaring lyricism of the second, are characteristic of Mendelssohn.

The opening movement, Allegro vivace, is built upon two principal themes. The first is heard at the very beginning—a spirited and happy subject for the strings; the second, played by the clarinets, is more restrained. The entire movement generates a feeling of joy, of healthy animal spirits, of contagious exhilaration. The second movement, Andante con moto—sometimes referred to as “the Pilgrims' March”—was believed by Moscheles to have its source in a Bohemian folk song. The beautiful subject that dominates the entire movement is first heard in the oboe, clarinet, and viols, and is then adopted by the strings. The clarinet has the second theme, graceful and delicate. In the third movement, Con moto moderato, a graceful and pleasing song is heard at the beginning and the end, the middle section being a Trio for bassoons and horns. The closing movement is vibrant with the exciting movement and rhythm of the Italian carnival dance, the Saltarello.

Recommended recording: VM-294 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

*Scotch Symphony*

In 1829, Mendelssohn toured Scotland. This trip was responsible not only for *Fingal's Cave* but also for the Third Symphony in A minor, Op. 56, better known as the *Scotch*. In a letter which Mendelssohn wrote from Scotland in 1829, he describes the source of his inspiration. "We went in the deep twilight to the Palace of Holyrood where Queen Mary lived and loved. There is a little room to be seen there, with a winding staircase leading up to it. There the murderers ascended and finding Rizzio . . . drew him out; about three chambers away is a small corner where they killed him. The chapel is roofless; grass and ivy grow abundantly in it; and before the altar, now in ruins, Mary was crowned Queen of Scotland. Everything around is broken and mouldering, and the bright sky shines through. I believe I found today in that old chapel the beginning of my *Scotch Symphony*." This is, of course, the introductory Andante, though some believe that he heard this theme sung by a girl in the streets of Edinburgh.

Whatever the source of Mendelssohn's inspiration, though, there is not much of Scotland in this symphony. Indeed, the printed score does not carry the descriptive subtitle. It is a symphony of characteristic Mendelssohnian suaveness, refinement, lyricism. If it is not deeply felt music, it is at least music that has surface beauties. The opening of the first movement (Andante) is a fluent lyric page that dashes into stormy brio; and the movement closes with an exquisite melody for the violins. The second movement is a Scherzo, capricious in mood. The Adagio that follows is contemplative; here again we have a Mendelssohn song to warm the heart. The closing movement has fire and brilliance.

Recommended recording: VM-699 (Rochester Philharmonic—Iturbi).

# MENOTTI

GIAN-CARLO MENOTTI, b. Cadigliano, Italy, 1911. Studied at the Milan Conservatory, then at the Curtis Institute (Philadelphia) with Scalero. He first achieved note with his opera-buffa, *Amelia Goes to the Ball*, successfully introduced in 1937. Subsequent operas were introduced over the radio, and at the Metropolitan Opera House.

"MY goal," Menotti has said, "is to say something simple and clear in as simple and clear a way as possible." He has achieved that goal, creating in his operas a style remarkable for its articulateness, lucidity, and spontaneity. Besides this, he combines wit and effervescence with an instinct for

good theater, expressing in his music every shade of comedy and satire. Besides *Amelia Goes to the Ball*, Menotti has written a robustly humorous radio opera, *The Old Maid and the Thief*, commissioned by the National Broadcasting Company and introduced over its network in 1938; and a powerful and moving operatic drama, *The Island God*, given its première at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1942.

## OPERA

### *Amelia Goes to the Ball*

Opera buffa in one act, book by the composer, introduced at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia, on April 1, 1937.

Finding the themes of his own musical generation too gloomy and their expression too complicated, Menotti in this opera turned back to the traditional Italian *opera buffa*, seeking to recapture its spirit in a modern idiom and manner. Believing also that opera was growing decadent in its failure to emphasize libretto and music equally, he undertook to write the book and the score simultaneously. The book was written in rhymed Italian; the score, in modern recitative (for conversational passages), and romanzas, duets, and terzetti (for the philosophical comments). Going still farther back for another inspiration, Menotti made use of a chorus after the Greek tradition to foretell the outcome of the plot and sustain the moods of the action.

The story takes place in Milan in or about 1910. Amelia is dressing herself in anticipation of attending a ball. Her husband discovers a letter from her lover, and Amelia promises to disclose the identity of her lover if her husband promises to take her to the ball. When the husband learns that the guilty man lives in the apartment below, he rushes out to kill him. Meanwhile, the lover enters through the balcony, protests his love for Amelia, and begs her to elope with him. Amelia is not interested in elopement; all she wants is to go to the ball. When the husband returns, husband and lover decide to discuss the situation. During this discussion, time passes—and Amelia is late for her ball. In desperation, she throws a vase at her husband's head and calls out to the police to arrest her lover for attacking her husband. The husband is taken to a hospital, and the lover to jail—and Amelia, in the company of the Chief of Police, goes to the ball.

To a bright, briskly paced libretto, Menotti has provided a score full of vigorous and robust tunes. He writes in the vein of Wolf-Ferrari, with a command of opera-buffa style. If he occasionally lacks a lightness of touch and the subtle play of rhythm and nuance which are the essential qualities of all great opera-buffa writing, he does not lack either wit or effervescence. The music is ductile, light-hearted, and generously endowed with rich-blooded melodies; and it is attractively spiced with occasional dissonances.

Recommended recording: Overture, V-15377 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy).



# MEYERBEER

GIACOMO MEYERBEER (originally Jakob Meyer Beer), b. Berlin, 1791. Was a child prodigy of the piano, studying with Lauska, Clementi, Zelter, Anselm Weber, and Abbé Vogler. His first opera, *Jephtha's Vow*, was unsuccessfully performed in Munich. In 1816 he went to Italy where he absorbed Italian styles and idioms of operatic writing. Influenced by this experience, he wrote Italian operas which were successfully received. He later settled in Paris, this time studying the French opera and assimilating its style. Dissatisfied with his Italian operas, he went into temporary retirement. From this he emerged as a composer of French operas, the first of which, *Robert le Diable*, was a sensation when introduced in Paris in 1831. A series of masterpieces, all written in the French manner, established him as one of the great opera composers of his time. He received many honors from The Netherlands, England, and Germany, including an appointment as Kapellmeister to Friedrich Wilhelm IV in Berlin. Meyerbeer died in Paris in 1864.

It cannot be denied that as a composer of opera Meyerbeer had faults, due largely to his inordinate desire to please his audiences. The commonplaces in his works, the trite materials, can be directly charged to this desire, as can the superficial glitter, false dramatics, overwritten sequences. None the less, he was a fine and important composer. His power of "astonishing and bewildering," as Parry wrote, "is unlimited. His cleverness is equal to any emergency." He had a feeling for dramatic effect that never failed him. Above everything else he was, as Arthur Hervey pointed out, an innovator. "His operas contain great beauties; he showed extraordinary dramatic perception and marked originality; he devised new instrumental effects; he helped to prepare the way for the modern music drama." Paul Bekker wrote: "His treatment of the orchestra reveals him to be an instrumental composer ranking with Berliozin skill, while his wealth of melody shows an inventiveness equal to the Italians'." In short, Meyerbeer's strong points are more significant than his weak ones. Franz Liszt spoke of him as inaugurating a "new epoch in operatic writing," while Hugo Riemann insisted that "history will point to Meyerbeer's music as one of the most important steps to Wagner's art."

## OPERAS

### *L'Africaine*

In five acts, book by Eugène Scribe, introduced at the Opéra in Paris on April 28, 1865.

*L'Africaine* was Meyerbeer's last opera, the fruit of his final years, and upon it he expended painstaking care and concentration. Neither poor health nor failing eyesight could deter him from writing the opera which he considered his *magnum opus*; and he was able to bring it to completion shortly before his death. Its first performance took place one year afterward—in 1865. It was a sensation, and up to the present time it has retained its popularity with opera audiences.

It is not, as Meyerbeer thought it was, his greatest opera. In the opinion of Brockway and Weinstock, it "is an ambiguous score: though the most disciplined of all Meyerbeer's operas in its separate numbers, it is a throw-back to the hysterical days of *Robert le diable*. . . . Plainly a work pieced together. . . . It is, generally, a gorgeous and somber score, with *longueurs* of spotless academic writing. . . . Yet, when Meyerbeer succeeds in *L'Africaine*, it is, perhaps, on the highest musical level he ever attained. . . . There are enough fine things in *L'Africaine* to make it tragic that Meyerbeer never managed to produce an opera in which he was consistently at his best from beginning to end. Such an opera would unquestionably have been among the finest ever composed."

The opera has for a central figure the famous explorer Vasco da Gama. Inez, daughter of the admiral Don Diego, is deeply in love with Vasco, but her father insists that she marry Don Pedro. Vasco returns from one of his voyages to tell of a new land he has discovered, and as proof he brings with him Selika (an Indian queen) and her servant Nelusko. Vasco is summarily thrown into prison. Selika goes to him and expresses her great love for him. Soon after this, Don Pedro decides to seek out the new land of which Vasco has told, taking with him as guides both Selika and Nelusko, as well as his beloved Inez. Vasco, realizing that Nelusko plans to destroy Don Pedro and his ship, pursues him to warn him of the impending danger; but Don Pedro is deaf to the warning. His boat is invaded by Nelusko's men, and everyone aboard is either killed or taken captive. Vasco, meanwhile, is brought by Selika to her own land; but, on learning that Inez is still alive, he deserts Selika to seek out his true lover. When Selika realizes that she has lost Vasco she commits suicide, as does Nelusko when he finds her.

The most famous single aria in the opera is the famous "O Paradis," which Vasco da Gama sings in Act IV in praise of the beauties of Selika's country. Other famous pages include the soprano aria "*Adieu, mon doux rivage*," from Act I, the ballade for baritone in Act III, "*Adamastor, roi des vagues*," and the "*Marche indienne*" from Act IV.

Recommended recordings: "*Adieu, mon rivage*," Decca 20200 (Rethberg); "*Adamastor, roi des vagues*," V-7153 (Ruffo); "*O Paradis*," V-12150 (Bjoerling).

### *Les Huguenots*

In five acts, book by Eugène Scribe and Emile Deschamps, introduced at the Opéra in Paris on February 29, 1836.

Meyerbeer's first successful French opera, *Robert le diable*, was succeeded five years later by his second notable work in the French style, *Les Huguenots*. Like all of Meyerbeer's operas, it is not a consistent masterpiece. It is a good spectacle, with several effective scenes that are none too well integrated; and it frequently sacrifices dramatic verities for pageantry and display. But it has great music, some of the greatest Meyerbeer ever wrote. Of this opera, Berlioz wrote: "The effervescence of the emotions excited by this masterpiece makes

one wish to be a great man in order to place one's glory and genius at Meyerbeer's feet." Arthur Hervey expressed the opinion that "had [Meyerbeer] written nothing else but the fourth act, he would be entitled to rank as one of the greatest dramatic composers of all time." Wagner, too, considered the fourth act one of the greatest acts in all operatic music—before his anti-Semitic prejudices distorted his critical vision.

Marguerite de Valois, the betrothed of Henry IV, plans to have Raoul de Nangis marry Valentin, daughter of the Count de St. Bris. When Raoul refuses to do so, the Count challenges him to a duel. After the Queen refuses to permit the duel, Raoul consents to marry Valentin. Meanwhile, the Count plans to kill Raoul. Valentin discovers this plot and warns Raoul. During a visit to Valentin, Raoul discovers that a plot had been hatched against the Huguenots to massacre them in cold blood. He rushes to warn his friends. Following the marriage of Raoul and Valentin (who turns Huguenot), the two are shot in a street battle.

The best passages in the opera—besides the much praised fourth act—include the tenor aria "*Plus blanche que la blanche hermine*," the recitative and aria for soprano "*Nobles seigneurs, salut!*" and "*Une Dame noble et sage*"—all from Act I; the soprano aria "*O beau pays de la Touraine*" from Act II; and the aria for bass and chorus from Act IV, "*Gloire au grand Dieu vengeur*."

Recommended recordings: "*Nobles seigneurs, salut!*" and "*Une Dame noble et sage*," V-7146 (Onegin).

### *Le Prophète*

Opera in five acts, book by Eugène Scribe, introduced at the Paris Opéra on April 16, 1849.

During a leave of absence from his post as Kapellmeister in Berlin, Meyerbeer visited Paris to receive from his librettist the book of *Le Prophète*. He worked enthusiastically on his new opera, and in 1849 it was presented with outstanding success at the Opéra.

In Holland, during the Anabaptist uprising under John of Leyden, John wishes to marry Bertha, vassal of Count Oberthal. But the Count is in love with her himself and refuses to permit the marriage. Because of John's resemblance to the painting of David in the Münster Cathedral, he is urged by three Anabaptist preachers to head a revolt. John, however, is eager only to marry Bertha, whom he is protecting from the Count. The Count's soldiers arrive on the scene and demand Bertha, threatening to kill John's mother, who is their captive, if John does not accede to their demand. John is forced to yield. Soon after this he heads the revolt, and with his rebels besieges the city of Münster; John himself now being known as "the Prophet"—though Bertha does not realize this. When, therefore, she is falsely told that John has been killed, she believes that "the Prophet" is the murderer, and she vows revenge. On discovering that John—alive—is the Prophet, she kills herself.

With his dramatic instinct and his flair for pageantry, Meyerbeer rose to the demands of the high moments in *Le Prophète*. It is not a completely organized work, and makes little attempt at consistency. But there are passages of rare grandeur—and it is these that have kept the opera in the repertory. Most famous is the stirring “Coronation March” from Act IV in which John is crowned as The Prophet. No less effective is the eloquent soprano aria “*Ah! mon fils!*” in Act II, sung by John’s mother when he saves her life by surrendering Bertha to the Count’s soldiers. Well known, too, are the tenor pastorella, “*Pour Bertha moi je soupire,*” from Act I; the Quadrille from Act II; the hymn for tenor and chorus, “*Roi du ciel,*” from Act IV; and the aria for alto, “*O prêtres de Baal,*” in Act V.

Recommended recordings: “*Ah! mon fils!*” V-36287 (Matzenauer); Quadrille, V-36238 (Sadler’s Wells Orchestra—Lambert); Coronation March, C-71287D (C.B.S. Symphony—Barlow); “*O prêtres de Baal,*” V-7146 (Onegin).

### *Robert le Diable*

In five acts, book by Scribe and Delavigne, first performed at the Opéra in Paris on November 21, 1831.

*Robert le Diable*, the first of Meyerbeer’s French operas, firmly established both his fame and the style of French romantic historical opera. Its striking effects and colorful scenes made it so expensive to mount that the director of the Opéra insisted upon some financial guarantee from Meyerbeer. But *Robert* proved as successful financially as artistically: within twenty years it had more than three hundred and thirty performances in Paris and brought into the Opéra’s coffers more than four million francs.

When introduced in London, however, the opera was coldly received. Its success there did not begin until 1847, when Jenny Lind was starred in it. It is interesting to recall that for this occasion the opera was rewritten by Meyerbeer for the purpose of reducing the rival soprano role so that Jenny Lind’s unique glory might not be dimmed.

*Robert*, write Brockway and Weinstock, “teems with those easy melodies Meyerbeer had learned to write in Venice—graceful, fluent, singable. . . . *Robert* is still a *pastiche*: the elements are there but not the integrating hand of the master confiseur.”

Duke Robert of Normandy goes to Sicily to compete in a tournament for the hand of the beautiful daughter of the Duke of Messina, Isabelle. Robert is in the power of a demon in human form named Bertram, who is instrumental in making him lose his horse and armor in gambling. Bertram now convinces Robert that he can acquire supernatural powers by stealing a magic branch found in the abbey of Ste. Rosalie. Through the spell of the branch, Robert acquires access to Isabella’s room and threatens to abduct her. Isabella’s eloquent pleading dissuades him; he breaks the branch, and with it its spell. Eventually, too, Robert is freed from the influence of Bertram, and the opera ends with the marriage of Isabella and Robert at the cathedral in Palermo.

The high moments of the opera include the poignant soprano aria, "*Robert, toi que j'aime*," with which Isabella dissuades Robert from his design to abduct her, and the stirring March of the Resurrected Nuns.

# MIASKOVSKY

NIKOLAI MIASKOVSKY, b. Novogeorgievsk, near Warsaw, 1881. Studied at the St. Petersburg Conservatory with Liadov and Rimsky-Korsakov. After serving in the army during the First World War, he was appointed teacher of composition at the Moscow Conservatory.

## SYMPHONIES

MIASKOVSKY is most famous for his symphonies, in which form he has already written more than twenty works. This vast symphonic output, as Nicolas Slonimsky points out, can be divided into four periods, "from the first to the sixth symphony, from the seventh to the twelfth, from the thirteenth to the eighteenth, and from the nineteenth to the twenty-third. The first period from the First to the Sixth Symphony is typical of his pre-revolutionary moods, introspective and at the same time mystical. The Sixth Symphony is the culminating point of these individualistic moods, although it was conceived in 1922 when Miaskovsky began to revise his intellectual outlook in the direction of a more realistic scheme of composition. . . . Miaskovsky's second symphonic period, from the Seventh to the Twelfth Symphony, symbolizes a path from the 'subjective' to the 'objective,' from the individual to the collective. Without trying to be literal in programmatic descriptions of the life in the Soviet Union of that period, he nevertheless went for inspiration to the fields and factories of his country. . . . The third period of Miaskovsky's symphonic cycle, from the Thirteenth to the Eighteenth Symphony, represents a synthesis of subjective moods and the objective realistic ideas. . . . The Nineteenth Symphony is the beginning of a new phase, almost utilitarian in character. Miaskovsky's symphonic writing here becomes more compact, more directly addressed to the masses."

### *Symphony No. 6 in E-flat minor*

In the frontispiece of the published score appears an explanation of the melancholy character of this symphony: "At the time of its writing, Miaskovsky was deeply impressed by the passing of two persons particularly dear to his heart. . . . Some portions of the Symphony are also influenced by *Les Aubes* by Emile Verhaeren, the Belgian poet."

The Sixth Symphony, Op. 23, was composed in 1922. The first movement, *Poco largamente*, opens with a stately theme for full orchestra which is later developed and elaborated. The second subject of the movement (strings, clarinet, bassoons) is like a lamentation and gives the movement its funereal character. The second movement, *Scherzo*, maintains the melancholy, with a second theme (directly before the Trio) somber in mood. The third movement, *Andante Appassionato*, is the most deeply felt of the four, passionate in its expression of a quiet grief. In the fourth movement Miaskovsky is the ardent revolutionary, this Finale being intended as a musical delineation of the Russian Revolution. Two French Revolutionary songs are quoted: *La Carmagnole* and *Ça ira*; these are later juxtaposed with the *Dies Irae*. A Russian folk song also is used throughout the movement.

### *Symphony No. 12 in G minor*

Miaskovsky composed his G minor Symphony, Op. 35, in 1932 to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of the October Revolution. The first movement, *Andante*, opens with a theme for clarinet, which is carried on by the English horn. The principal section of the movement, *Allegro giocoso*, is brilliant, with a particularly effective subject for the flute. The trumpet opens the second movement, *Presto agitato*. Following this, the double bass gives out a subject which becomes the germ of an ingenious fugato. The third movement, marked *Allegro festivo e maestoso*, has an energetic first subject contrasted with an eloquently expressive second theme. The movement rises to great dramatic power.

### *Symphony No. 21*

Miaskovsky's twenty-first symphony, Op. 51, was introduced by the Moscow Philharmonic Society, under the direction of Alexander Gauk, on November 16, 1940. It was originally written for the Chicago Orchestra on its fiftieth anniversary, and was performed by that body on December 26, 1940 under the title *Symphonie-Fantasie*. The Moscow musicologist, Gregory Shneerson, described the symphony as follows: "The great quality of this composition lies in the combination of impressive beauty of conception with a plasticity of musical images, profundity of content, perfection of form, and integrity of structure. The Symphony, permeated with philosophical reflection, leaves an ennobling impression. In this relatively small work, there is concentrated an enormous life-asserting force, which receives its magnificent expression in the powerful culmination of the development section. The formal structure of the Symphony is distinguished by great originality. The Symphony is in one movement, but the Introduction acquires here a separate and individual status. Broadly developed, the Introduction contains in itself, as in a seed, the entire cycle of main concepts of the Symphony. The initial theme, given out by the clarinet, determines the mood. This is the

fundamental musical thought, from which grow other thematic elements of the Symphony.

## MILHAUD

DARIUS MILHAUD, b. Aix, France, 1892. Studied at the Paris Conservatory with d'Indy, Gédalge, and Widor. In 1917, he served as attache at the French Legation in Rio de Janeiro. Soon after the World War, he associated himself with the group of younger composers known as the French Six (*see* Satie). With the dissolution of that group, Milhaud continued to go in his own direction as composer until, after Ravel's death, he was accepted as the leading French composer. In 1940, Milhaud settled in the United States, becoming a member of the music department at Mills College, California.

MILHAUD has written in so many different styles that it is difficult to classify him. He has written jazz music, South American music, and Hebrew music. He has been satiric, witty, romantic, lyric, and dramatic. Edwin Evans has pointed out three predominating factors in Milhaud's music. "One is the passionate vehemence which . . . many critics ascribe to his racial origin. Another, which is also a Jewish trait, is the intense preoccupation with the 'chess-problem' aspect of music, which provides an attractive field for the intellectual ingenuity that the Jews bring with them from the East. His method is a curious simplicity, not in the least affected . . . but congenial. . . . He has at times reached great heights."

Aaron Copland considers lyricism one of the most significant attributes of Milhaud's music. "Springing from a native lyricism, his music always sings. Whether he composes a five-act opera or a two-page song, this singing quality is paramount. The music flows so rationally that it seems to have been improvised rather than composed."

## BALLET

### *La Création du Monde*

In one act, book by Blaise Cendrars, introduced at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées in Paris on October 25, 1923.

The French were among the first Europeans to be attracted by American popular music, and among European composers Debussy and Erik Satie pioneered in writing ambitious works incorporating popular American idioms. One of the first and most successful applications of jazz to serious musical forms was Milhaud's ballet *La Création du Monde*. Antedating, as it does, Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* by about a year, it may well be con-

sidered the first major serious work of music written in a jazz style. "Probably the most perfect of all pieces of symphonic jazz," Paul Rosenfeld called it. "A subtle, wonderfully singing, vigorously contrapuntal, richly orchestrated and completely satisfactory score, it tensely, sustainedly, savorously expands the style fathered by W. C. Handy of the *St. Louis Blues* in a large form and with the characteristic means of the jazz banditti: harmonic orchestra, saxophone, and multiple percussion. And it gives a rich and full expression to the peculiar feeling of the blues."

*La Création du Monde* tells how man was created and how the world was born as an aborigine might have seen it. Musically, this story is told with jazz resources: Blues, ragtime rhythms and syncopations, a jazz fugue.

Milhaud had adapted the music of this ballet into an orchestral suite which has enjoyed popularity at symphony concerts.

Recommended recording: orchestral suite, CM-X18 (Symphony Orchestra—Milhaud).

## CONCERTO

### *Concerto for Percussion Instruments*

"The idea of writing this concerto," the composer has informed us, "was suggested by M. Théo. Coutelier. . . . The work, which eschews the characteristics of jazz, is written for a solo player of percussion instruments, accompanied by a small orchestra of strings and wind. There are two movements. The first is vigorous and dramatic; the second is restrained and sad, and has a funereal character."

The Concerto was introduced on December 5, 1930 by the Padeloup Orchestra of Paris directed by D. E. Inghelbrecht.

## OPERA

### *Le Pauvre Matelot*

In one act, book by Jean Cocteau, first performed at the Opéra-Comique in Paris in 1927.

Although Milhaud has composed many operas more ambitious in scope and in uses of theatrical resources, none is more effective or poignant than this one-act opera.

It was a newspaper clipping that inspired Cocteau's libretto. A sailor returns home after a year of absence. Since he is not recognized by his wife, he decides to test her fidelity by telling her that he is a rich friend of her husband who has been left stranded and impoverished in a foreign land. Late that night, the wife murders him in his bed in order to rob him of money which could facilitate her bringing her husband home again.

In setting this grim tale to music, Milhaud utilized, as Henri Prunières wrote, a "very melodic style which constantly calls to mind ancient sea songs



and folklore. . . . The vocal parts are always grateful and melodious, with no recitatives. The polyphonic writing, at times very light, and again of extreme richness, accompanies the voices in a compact symphonic commentary." It is in short, "a score . . . rich in musical material."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Le Carnaval d'Aix*

In 1924, Milhaud composed music for a ballet called *Salade*, about a carnival in Aix. Concerning this ballet, Milhaud wrote: "It is—like an old Italian comedy, some of whose characters it uses—simply an imbroglio of various farce elements. For this reason it is called *Salade*, which means just what 'salad' means anywhere." Produced at the Théâtre Cigale in Paris in June 1924, it was an outstanding success.

In 1925, for his projected tour of America, Milhaud adapted the best music of the ballet into a fantasy for piano and orchestra. He called it *Le Carnaval d'Aix* because, in his own explanation, "every carnival has a place where it is held, and Aix happens to be my birthplace . . . The fantasy is a collection of short pieces just like Schumann's *Carnaval*."

The fantasy is composed of twelve intriguing morsels entitled as follows: I. "*Le Corse*"; II. "*Tartaglia*"; III. "*Isabelle*"; IV. "*Rosetta*"; V. "*Le Bon et le mauvais tuteur*"; VI. "*Coviello*"; VII. "*Le Capitaine Cartuccia*"; VIII. "*Polichinelle*"; IX. "*Polka*"; X. "*Cinzio*"; XI. "*Souvenir de Rio*"; XII. "*Finale*."

## SYMPHONY

### *Symphony*

Milhaud was commissioned by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra to compose his first symphony for the celebration of that orchestra's fiftieth anniversary.

The commission came at a time when the usually prolific Milhaud had been feeling stifled, creatively, by the outbreak of the Second World War and could not write a line of music. Now, strengthened by the assignment, he returned to creative work, bringing to it new freshness and vigor. He composed the symphony in his native city of Aix in December 1939, and it was introduced by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Stock on October 17, 1940.

The symphony is in four movements. The first, *Pastorale modérément animé*, is described by the composer as "very melodic and quiet with great feeling for nature." The second movement, *Très vif*, is a scherzo, "rather dramatic and robust with a fugato in the middle." The third movement, *Très modéré*, "begins with a theme like a chorale. The character of the movement is deeply tender. The chorale theme alternates with a very expressive

melody." The closing movement, *Animé*, has the atmosphere "of a country, of out-of-doors."

# MONIUSZKO

STANISLAUS MONIUSZKO, b. Ubiel, Minsk, Poland, 1819. He studied with Freyer in Warsaw, then in Berlin with Rundenhagen. In 1838, he officially emerged as a composer with the publication of three songs. For many years he earned his living playing the organ at St. John's Church in Vilna. In 1846 his first opera, *The Lottery*, was produced successfully. In 1858, he made Warsaw his home, enjoying a busy career there as conductor at the Opera, and teacher at the Conservatory. He died in Warsaw in 1872.

**A**LTHOUGH Moniuszko composed more than half a dozen operas and a great amount of choral and orchestral music, besides four hundred songs, he has earned immortality by virtue of one work alone—the opera *Halka*.

## OPERA

### *Halka*

In four acts, book by Vladimir Wolski, introduced at the Warsaw Opera on January 1, 1854.

*Halka* is not only the most famous Polish opera, but it is also accepted today as the major national Polish opera of all time. It was introduced, in a two-act version, at the Vilna Concert Hall in 1847, but its première in its present known form did not take place until seven years after that, at the Warsaw Opera. Since then, it has been performed by the world's leading opera houses, coming to Prague in 1868, to St. Petersburg, Kiev, and Moscow in 1892, and to New York in 1905. In April 1926 it was given a magnificent revival at the Vienna Volksoper, and a few years after that it was released throughout Europe and America in a Polish all-talking film.

"The listener is carried upon the stream of the music," wrote Zadislaw Jachimecki, "and always feels the personality of the composer and the sincerity of his inspiration. The songs of the opera are very melodious, characteristic, and dramatic. There are, however, also other remarkable factors which raise it to the rank of a masterpiece. No Polish dramatic composer had previously expressed by dance scenes the Polish national temperament so perfectly as Moniuszko did."

*Halka* is based upon a very simple plot. The peasant girl Halka is deeply in love with the nobleman Pan Janusz, who, in turn, is attached to Sophie,

the daughter of a landed proprietor. Janusz seduces Halka and then abandons her; and when she learns of his approaching marriage to Sophie, she goes to his castle to denounce him. She is denied entrance by the servants. To avenge herself, she gains admission into the castle during the wedding ceremonies of Pan Janusz and Sophie and kills herself before their eyes.

The Peasant Ballet in the third act is famous, and is largely responsible for giving this opera its strong national flavor.

## MONTEMEZZI

ITALO MONTEMEZZI, b. Vigasio, near Verona, 1875. Studied at the Milan Conservatory with Saladino and Ferroni. He began composing operas after his graduation, but did not achieve success until *L'Amore dei tre re* was produced in 1913. In 1941, Montemezzi conducted a performance of *L'Amore dei tre re* at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York.

UP to the present time, Montemezzi's first success in the field of opera has remained his greatest. *L'Amore dei tre re*, which Olin Downes has referred to as "the last opera of importance to come from Italy," consistently maintains its popularity in the opera houses of the world. Writing in a neo-romantic vein, Montemezzi is attracted by neither scholasticism nor mysticism. In the words of F. Bonavia: "His main aim is to create the musical atmosphere in which the characters of the drama must live in order to express themselves by means of melody. Certainly his chief asset . . . appears to be his obvious sincerity and a certain modesty of style, which is never over-elaborate though often finished and neat."

### OPERA

#### *L'Amore dei Tre Re*

In three acts, book by Sem Benelli, first performed at La Scala in Milan on April 10, 1913.

*L'Amore dei tre re* made its composer internationally famous. In an interview, Montemezzi has explained its origin: "I had seen a performance of Benelli's *The Jest*. I was so eager to write a score for it that I immediately wrote to Benelli. He didn't answer me. He never answers letters. But two weeks later I fortunately ran into him. The news was crushing: the opera rights to *The Jest* had already been sold. For \$100, I might add. Seeing me so disheartened, however, Benelli said: 'But I have another play I am writing,

and the title of it alone spells success for an opera. It is *The Love of Three Kings*.

"For hours after that we walked about the city, arm in arm, while he told me in great detail about the characters, story, and atmosphere. He hadn't a word written down, but from what he told me I could easily visualize the beauty of his drama, and without delay I took him to Ricordi. We signed a contract then and there—and just six months later *L'Amore dei tre re* was produced as a play in Rome."

Two years and three months after the play's première—that is, on April 10, 1913—the opera was introduced at La Scala in Milan. It was a phenomenal success. Ten months later it was introduced at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York (under the direction of Toscanini). It opened the season at the Champs-Élysées Theater in Paris; was soon afterwards performed at Covent Garden in London; and before long was in the repertoire of every major opera house in Europe.

The opera has a strikingly dramatic libretto. Fiora, a former princess, is married to the warrior Manfred, son of Archibaldo. But she is in love with a handsome prince named Avito. Fiora confesses her guilty love to Archibaldo who, in fury, strangles her. Determined to kill her lover as well, but not knowing his identity, Archibaldo adopts a ruse. He puts poison on the dead Fiora's lips; when her lover Avito arrives and sees her dead, he embraces her, kisses her lips—and dies. But Manfred, her husband, also comes and sees the dead body; in his grief he, too, kisses her lips. As Manfred lies dying, his father, Archibaldo, arrives, believing that he has trapped the guilty man. On seeing that he has killed his own son as well, he succumbs to a terrible grief.

This moving play boasts a powerful and poignant score, which rises to every demand of the text. "Let it be admitted at once," wrote Lawrence Gilman, "that Montemezzi is a musician who commands respect. He is a composer of evident scholarship, of indubitable feeling, of seriousness and sincerity. . . . He has given us a score in which, from beginning to end, there is not a measure which can justly be called meretricious; a score that makes no *ad captandum* appeal at all. He has applied himself with undivided earnestness and devotion to the task of setting forth his dramatic theme with all the enhancing power of which he is capable. There is no defection of intention, no defection of capacity."

# MONTEVERDI

CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI, b. Cremona, Italy, 1567. Studied with Ingegneri; then in 1583 published his first work, a book of madrigals. In 1589 he was appointed violist in the court orchestra of the Duke of Mantua, enjoying such esteem that the Duke frequently took him on his travels. In 1601, he became maestro di cappella. Afterward, he turned to opera, producing his masterpiece *Orfeo* in 1607. In 1613, Monteverdi left Mantua to assume post of maestro di cappella at St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice. He died in Venice in 1643.

MONTEVERDI was unquestionably one of the historic figures in music, and one of the greatest composers to precede Bach. Extraordinarily inventive and audacious, he brought the madrigal to its highest point of development in Italy, and then became the first great composer of opera. He was the modernist of his time, his unresolved discords provoking confusion and dismay among his contemporaries. His restless intellect was continually groping for some fresh way of expressing itself. Ever responsive to the new forms and styles then arising in Europe, he adopted these whenever he felt that they could serve his artistic purpose. His music, in whatever form he chose to write, "astonishes by its richness as by its incredible variety," wrote Henri Prunières. "Yet the personality of Monteverdi gives to this work, written in styles not only different but incongruous, a surprising unity. Everything bears the mark of his genius; the contrapuntal motets, the madrigals with their barbaric dissonances, the graceful canzonette, the dramatic narratives. The slightest arietta by Monteverdi has so peculiar a quality that the composer can be recognized in the very first bars. . . . The music of Monteverdi, like that of Bach, is never empty of thought and feeling; it finds its end not in itself but in the emotions it expresses. His vehement soul is revealed entire, with its passionate sadness, its strong sensuousness, its love of life; for this great Latin artist, who suffered so greatly, preserved to the end that love and feeling for life."

## CHORAL MUSIC

### *Madrigals*

Monteverdi has composed an entire library of music for chorus, including Masses, Motets, Requiems, Madrigals, and Scherzi Musicali. Of greatest importance are his books of madrigals, in which the form achieves its highest point of technical development. (For the origin of the Madrigal, *see* Morley). "In their audacious chromaticisms, their unexampled realization of moods, and their versatility of expression, Monteverdi's madrigals represent, to those who know them, the high-water mark of the whole movement of madrigal writing," wrote McKinney and Anderson.

In 1583 Monteverdi published his first book of madrigals, in which he at once disclosed his notable mastery of contrapuntal music. This volume is in the best traditions of the Italian madrigal school of Vecchi (1550–1605) and Marenzio (c. 1560–1599).

In 1599, Monteverdi traveled with the Duke of Mantua to Flanders and Spa—a journey that had a far-reaching influence on his artistic development, since it brought him into contact with the French school of composers, their technique and style of composition. According to Monteverdi's brother, Monteverdi became soon after this the first composer in Italy "to practise the French manner of vocal writing in the new style which has been much admired during the last three or four years, whether as the accompaniment of words, of motets or madrigals, or songs and arias." His writing now became more graceful and lucid. And in some of his later madrigals he brought the form to such an advanced stage of development that it was now only a step to the choral cantata: He included elaborate solos in the madrigal, and even deserted its traditional *a cappella* style by writing instrumental accompaniments. So far did the form of the madrigal advance with Monteverdi that it could go no farther; after Monteverdi, therefore, its decline set in.

From the many madrigals composed by Monteverdi, Karl Nef singles out one for special mention: "*Me piu dolce il penar per Amarilli*, in the sixth volume (1614). "It overflows with ideas that are always effective and never miss their point. At the beginning of the madrigal, . . . one should observe the division of the voices in two groups: the two upper voices present in echo form lamentations which swell and increase little by little, while the three low voices unfold the motifs of the laments in excited rhythms. At the words which evoke death, one feels in the music a desire for annihilation; then suddenly, the five voices combined celebrate in full harmony the nobility of the state of love."

Also noteworthy in the sixth volume, "as representing in almost perfect form the ideals of the Renaissance," wrote McKinney and Anderson, "is his madrigal sestina *Le lagrime d'amante al sepolcro dell' amata*, a cycle of six madrigals set to a carefully constructed lot of tests based on arbitrarily designed rhyme schemes—the whole thing designed for the same sophisticated audiences as were the *Orlando Furioso* and the paintings of Botticelli."

Recommended recordings: *Lagrime d'amante al sepolcro dell' amata*, CM-218 (Bolognesi Chorus—Cremesini); *Cor mio, mentre vi miro*, Decca-25209 (La Scala Chorus—Veneziani); *Ecco mormorar l'onde*, C-4204M (Madrigal Singers—Engel); *Hor ch'el ciel e la terra*, V-12300 (Vocal Ensemble—Boulanger); *Ohime, dove il mio ben*, V-12302 (Vocal Ensemble—Boulanger).

## OPERA

The first genius in the history of opera was Monteverdi. It was he who took what was then a comparatively inorganic form and converted it into an artistic expression of major importance.

The opera—or *dramma per musica*, as it was then called—was born in Florence, Italy, during the Renaissance. In 1580, a group of art lovers, now known as the *camerata*, gathered at the home of Giovanni Bardi to discuss art. The members of the *camerata* were inspired by the Renaissance spirit to turn to Greek models for the creation of a new musical art. From Aristoxenus' treatise on music they drew the idea of making music imitate speech, and in this way they evolved the recitative—the backbone of the early opera and a revolutionary step away from the polyphonic music of the time.

One of the members of the *camerata* was Giulio Caccini (1550–1618), and it was he who was the pioneer in the creation of this “new music”: in 1602 he published a series of “monodies” in which a break with polyphony was made once and for all and which, through establishing the recitative, paved the way for the composition of the first opera.

The first opera was composed by Jacopo Peri (1561–1633). It was called *Dafne*, and was introduced at the Palazzo Corsi in 1597. Peri composed a second dramatic work, *Euridice*, in 1600. Caccini, too, composed an opera of his own, also named *Euridice*.

Both Peri and Caccini wrote with stark simplicity. Their characters appeared on the stage, indulged in declamations (accompanied by the strumming of instruments), and left. There was no trace of singable melodies; their operas consisted exclusively of recitatives.

That within a few years this primitive form was converted into vibrant art was due to Monteverdi's genius. It was he who first suggested, and to a certain extent even realized, the full artistic possibilities of the art-form created by the *camerata*; he who gave it point, meaning, direction, significance. The *dramma per musica*, as Monteverdi received it from Peri and Caccini, had lacked cohesion, a definite artistic purpose, a definite understanding of the potentialities of the new form. In their operas drama took precedence over music, and there was undue emphasis on scene-painter and dancer, and too little on singer and orchestra; as well as a striking poverty of musical resources. With Monteverdi, opera changed its body and soul, acquiring personality and character. Superseding the primitive orchestra (consisting of a group of lutes supplemented by a keyboard instrument), Monteverdi's orchestra consisted of more than thirty musicians—an essential part of the drama, exploring new ways of voicing instrumental music, and through instrumental music intensifying the drama and setting the mood. Instead of writing exclusively in the recitative form, he utilized the aria, the duet, the trio—opening up new worlds for vocal music. Most important of all, he apportioned the burden of the drama equally between text and music, thus arriving at altogether new qualities of artistic expression.

### *Orfeo*

In five acts, book by Alessandro Striggio, first performed at the Accademia del' Invaghiti in Mantua, February 24, 1607.

Monteverdi first heard of the *camerata* when he returned from his Flemish visit in 1599. One year later, it is believed, he attended a performance of Peri's *Euridice*. Impressed by the possibilities of the new form, Monteverdi soon decided to turn from madrigal writing to opera; and, in doing so, he wrote a new chapter in musical history.

At its first performance in Mantua, *Orfeo* was a tremendous success (as the poet Ferrari hastened to inform the Duke by letter). The small audience recognized at once what new vistas were opened up by Monteverdi's epoch-making work. In comparison with this masterpiece, the works of Peri and Caccini already appeared archaic. The recitative had acquired flexibility, texture, artistic meaning, was full of subtle modulations and implicit with dramatic impact. A greater independence of movement conveyed deep emotional feeling. Here, too, lyric writing had emerged: the eloquent *Ecco pur ch'a voi ritorno*, which opened the second act, must have touched more than one heart at that first performance. Here was a full orchestra exploiting such new effects as the pizzicato and the tremolo to suggest dramatic excitement. Here was the give-and-take between the stage drama and the music. Thus was the first great opera born, and its first hearers were perceptive enough to realize that they were witnessing great and wonderful art.

Discussing the score of *Orfeo*, Henri Prunières wrote: "The whole score shows considerable attention to variety of effect. . . . Contrast abounds . . . The powerful Venetian colorist is at work. The first act is a luminous tone picture in clear tints. It is almost entirely given up to joyous shepherd choruses with dancing. . . . The atmosphere of the second act is somber throughout. . . . In Act III, by the substitution of brass for strings, Monteverdi produces a dark and truly malevolent effect. The fourth act is all in half tints, suited to the pale light which reigns in infernal regions; and in Act V there is a progression from the dark despair of Orpheus to the golden glow of musical apotheosis. . . . He shows an astonishing sensitiveness to the expressive value of each instrument, and to what we call instrumental color."

The opera is, of course, based upon the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice, which is too well known to require repetition. (For the plot of this legend see: Gluck—*Orfeo*). In the Monteverdi opera, unlike that of Gluck, Orpheus and Eurydice are not reunited in the end, for Orpheus, by looking back at his beloved loses her forever.

Recommended recording: "*Ecco pur ch'a voi ritorno*," V-21747 (Crane).



# MORLEY

THOMAS MORLEY, genius of the English madrigal, b. England, 1557. Was a chorister at St. Paul's Cathedral. When his voice broke, he became a pupil of William Byrd. In 1589, he was appointed organist at St. Paul's, and in 1592 he became a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. In 1594 he published his first volume of madrigals, the first important examples of the madrigal form in England. He died in London in 1603.

As the first of the important English madrigal composers, Thomas Morley has a secure position in the history of music. But besides its historical significance, Morley's music is notable for its charm, grace, elegance, and esthetic appeal. In the words of Edmund Horace Fellowes, it reflects "the light-hearted spirit of the composer, who excelled all the English madrigalists in this particular vein. . . . They are written with consummate skill and with extraordinarily full harmonic effects, while their phrasing and melodic beauty go near perfection."

Though Morley is treated here exclusively as a composer of madrigals, other works of his are of outstanding interest as well—particularly his engaging and seductive set of ballets (1595) which includes that deathless gem, "About the Maypole New." But Morley is greatest in his madrigals. It is in this form—of which masterpieces like *Now Is the Month of Maying* and *Sing We and Chant It* are classic examples—that he proved himself a composer of major importance.

## Madrigals

The madrigal, a secular composition for two, three, or more unaccompanied voices, was born in Italy. Its first masters included Adrian Willaert (1488–1562), Orazio Vecchi (1551–1605), Carlo Gesualdo (1560–1614), Luca Marenzio (c. 1560–1599), and Claudio Monteverdi (see above). It is believed that the form was introduced to England by the amateur-musician Nicolas Yonge who, familiar with Italian madrigals, had them performed at his home. In the early part of 1588, Yonge published a volume of fifty-seven madrigals, containing the best examples of Italian madrigal writing. This volume also included two madrigals by an English composer, William Byrd (1543–1623)—the first examples of madrigal writing in England.

But though Byrd was the first English composer to adopt the form, Thomas Morley was its first undisputed genius. And with Morley the golden age of the English madrigal began. What Ernest Walker wrote about the whole school of great madrigal composers in England applies equally to Morley himself: "So far as greatness in handling of material, there can be no doubt that the concerted vocal music of the chief men of the time represents the supreme flower of English art. . . . Limited by necessary historical condi-

tions as their technical resources are, they can between them cover a wide range of emotional expression, and portray it from end to end, with a subtle directness that places their work very high among the things worthy of permanent remembrance by musicians of all nationalities. . . . They can look in the face any composer who has ever lived; if they are not among the supreme divinities they are at any rate Titans among the earth-born."

Morley published his first volume of madrigals in 1594; in 1598, a second volume; and in 1603, edited *The Triumphs of Orianna* (written in honor of Queen Elizabeth), in which are gathered the foremost examples of contemporary English madrigal-writing, including work by John Bull (1562–1628), Orlando Gibbons (1583–1625), Weelkes (1575–1623), and Wilbye (1574–1638.)

Recommended recordings: *Fire, fire my Heart*, C-5548 (St. George's Singers); *I Follow, lo, the Footing*, C-9877 (St. George's Singers); *My Bonnie She Smileth*, V-4316 (London Madrigal Group—Lawrence); *Now Is the Month of Maying*, V-4316 (London Madrigal Group—Lawrence); *Sing We and Chant It*, C-5716 (St. George's Singers).

## MOZART

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART, b. Salzburg, Austria, 1756. He was a phenomenal prodigy, revealing the most extraordinary musical intelligence and native gifts from earliest childhood. When he was only six he toured Europe and amazed its capitals with his incomparable endowments. Other tours took him to Italy where, on one occasion, he wrote down the *Miserere* of Allegri after a single hearing, and on another visit he was commissioned to write an opera. When he outgrew his childhood, he was engaged by the Archbishop of Salzburg as principal composer and virtuoso. He severed all connections with the Archbishop in 1781 and settled in Vienna. There he composed his greatest works, some of which were extraordinarily successful. Despite his successes, however, he was usually in dire financial straits. He died in Vienna in 1791.

LIKE Lewis Carroll of *Alice in Wonderland*, Mozart is loved by the uneducated and by the cultured, by the naive and by the sophisticated. But each loves him for different reasons. It requires no great sophistication or extensive education to respond to Mozart's singable melodies, to his old-world charm and grace, to the lightness of his touch. Thus the unschooled music lover is fond of Mozart for the pure delight he brings him. He can listen to and enjoy the symphonies, concertos, sonatas, operas, and chamber works because they are pleasant to the ear and comforting to the senses. The effects for which Mozart strives are achieved so effortlessly and so naturally that to the uninitiated it seems that here, surely, is the ultimate in simplicity.

The trained musician, the musical scholar, also worships Mozart, though for other reasons. No musician ever outgrows this music. The more one knows Mozart, the greater the magic one discovers, the deeper the subtleties, the profounder the artistic insight. What appears to the average music lover

as simplicity is, to the trained musician, the apotheosis of craftsmanship: the ability to write music that is inevitable in its logic, as inexorable as fate itself; so perfectly chiseled that not a single note is superfluous.

The music lover who is first attracted to Mozart because of the lovable tunes and effortless spontaneity finds more and more to fascinate him as he knows his Mozart better. To hear a Mozart work for the hundredth time is to hear it with quite different ears: No longer is charming sound the attraction; there now comes a recognition of the wonder of the genius's intuition, the infallibility of his taste, the consummate mastery of all technical resources, and the supreme gift of always knowing how to say the right thing at the right moment. There are things in Beethoven, in Brahms, in Wagner, which some of us wish might have been written differently; but in Mozart, whether we are listening for the first or for the hundredth time, we never want anything changed. No melody strikes us as too short or too long; no instrumentation over-refined or overladen; no development too complex or too slight. Everything is in perfect proportion to everything else—everything is just as it should be. Like a work of Nature, a work by Mozart seems inevitable as it stands; and no human hand seems able to make an improvement on it. For Mozart, besides having genius, had talent; he is one of the few composers in the world who had both, and that one reason is why he is unique.

What is perhaps most impressive in Mozart is his wonderful taste. Whatever effects he seeks, whatever emotion he aims at expressing is conveyed with the utmost sensitivity and refinement. He can be light-hearted and gay (as in the German Dances); he can indulge in rowdy humor (as in the *Musical Joke*); he can quote himself mischievously (as in *Don Giovanni*); he can poke malicious fun at the tonal peculiarities of certain instruments (as in the bassoon concerto). Yet his humor is never vulgar burlesque, never loses its decorum. And Mozart can be tragic, as in some of his slow movements, in the C minor Piano Concerto, the *Requiem*, the G minor String Quintet. What the Aurlthian poet, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, once wrote about Mozart in a monograph—namely, that Mozart falls short of true greatness because he was incapable of expressing grief—can only be the estimate of one whose knowledge of Mozart's music is superficial. Mozart has his tragic moments in his music, but it is tragedy always communicated with classic restraint; here is no tearing of hair, or wringing of hands—but only the heartbreak that expresses itself in the droop of a lip or the quiver of a nostril.

In the pages that follow, the various Mozart works described are—within their respective categories—listed in the order of their Köchel (K.) numbers. In Mozart's day it had not yet become the general practice to use opus numbers; and, partly for this reason, considerable confusion arose over the order and the dates of Mozart's works. Some seventy years after his death—in 1862—this confusion was happily dissipated by the publication of the famous Köchel catalog, in which the eminent Viennese scholar Dr. Ludwig Köchel dated, put in order, and provided bibliographical material for most

of the Mozart works then known. Two subsequent editions—the latest in 1937—have added new facts discovered by other authorities. Since 1862, therefore, it has been the custom to identify Mozart's works by their Köchel (or K.) numbers.

## CHORAL MUSIC

### *Ave Verum*, K.618

The magic of the *Ave Verum Corpus*—its spiritual eloquence and beatific serenity defies analysis. It is a simple melody presented against an almost elementary harmonic structure; the writing for the chorus has schoolbook order and discipline. Yet what a wealth of feeling, what depth of expressiveness, what other-worldly beauty are found in its pages! It is this simplicity and this spirituality that have kindled the universal love of this music, which remains one of the truly miraculous achievements of Mozart's genius. The *Ave Verum*, like the *Requiem*, was composed in the last year of the master's life (1791).

Recommended recording: C-69488D (Strasbourg Cathedral Choir—Hoch).

### *Requiem*, K.626

The strange tale of the composition of the *Requiem* has often been told; but because it is authentic and because it contributes to a more sympathetic understanding of the music, it is worth retelling. In July 1791, a mysterious stranger dressed in gray called on Mozart at his Vienna home and asked him to compose a requiem. The fee was generous; the only condition imposed was that Mozart make no attempt to learn the source of the commission. Actually the messenger came from a certain Count von Walsegg, who made a practice of commissioning musical works which he later exhibited as his own. But Mozart—harassed by illness and care and haunted by thoughts of death—suddenly became obsessed with the idea that the mysterious stranger was a supernatural messenger, come to bid him compose his own requiem. When, in the September following, *Die Zauberflöte* (upon which he was working at the time) was completed, he set to work feverishly upon the *Requiem*, convinced that he was writing it for himself. As he wrote, his music became more and more associated in his mind with his own death. "I cannot rid my eyes of the image of this stranger. I see him continually, begging me, soliciting me, and impatiently demanding my work. I go on because composition wearies me less than resting. Besides, I have nothing more to fear. I know from what I feel that the hour sounds; I am on the point of death; I have finished before having enjoyed my talent. . . . And so I finish my funeral song, I must not leave it incomplete."

(Actually, this is just what he did, and it was his pupil Süßmayr who completed the work, from the final sketches which the composer had left.)

The work was always on Mozart's mind, up to the last hour of his life. The afternoon before his death, he had the manuscript brought to his bed where

—with a few of his friends—he began singing it; when they came to the “*Lacrymosa*” Mozart burst into tears. During his last hours, in delirium, he kept imitating the sound of trumpets, perhaps to voice the music of the “*Tuba mirum*” section.

Thus, written as it was with the thought of death uppermost in the composer’s mind, the *Requiem* is the most poignant, the most moving of all his works. It is, in the description of John F. Runciman, “steeped in sadness and gloom, with rare moments of fiery exaltation, or hysterical despair; at times beauty has been almost—almost, but never quite—driven from Mozart’s thought by the anguish that tormented him as he wrote . . . The esthetic qualities are subordinated to the expression of overwhelming emotion in the Requiem, but not deliberately; unconsciously, rather, perhaps even against Mozart’s will. . . . The pervading note of the whole work is struck at the beginning of the first number. . . . In the opening bar of the Requiem we have only sullen gloom and foreboding, deadly fear begotten of actual foreknowledge of things to come. . . . The Dies Irae is magnificent music, but the effect is enormously intensified by Mozart’s first (in the Kyrie) making us guess at the picture by the agitation of mind into which it throws him, and then suddenly opening the curtain and letting us view for ourselves the lurid splendors; and surely no more awful picture of the Judgment was ever painted than we have here in the Dies Irae, Tuba mirum, Rex tremendae, and Confutatis. . . . But the prevailing mood is one of depressing sadness, which would become intolerable by reason of its monotony were it possible to listen to the Requiem as a work of art merely, and not as the tearful confession of one of the most beautiful spirits ever born into the world.”

Some controversy has arisen as to how much of the *Requiem* is Mozart’s and how much Süßmayr’s. An eloquent answer to the question was that of Beethoven who, when he was told that not Mozart but Süßmayr wrote the work, exclaimed that if Mozart did not write it, then the man who wrote it was a Mozart.

The Requiem is in fifteen sections: Requiem aeternam; Kyrie; Dies Irae; Tuba mirum; Rex tremendae; Recordare; Confutatis; Lacrimosa; Domine Jesu Christe; Hostias; Sanctus; Benedictus; Agnus Dei; Lux aeterna; and Cum sanctis tuis.

Recommended recording: VM-649 (U. of P. Choral Society; Philadelphia Orchestra—McDonald).

## CONCERTOS

Mozart may well be called the father of the modern concerto. What had hitherto been written in this form was, for the most part, an adaptation of the concerto grosso, with no genuine understanding of the true role of the solo instrument. It was so with J. S. Bach; and even with Haydn and Karl Philipp Emanuel Bach the concerto was only a skeleton of the form later developed. Mozart, however, as Brockway and Weinstock point out, “did such a perfect job of fusing and adapting certain elements he found at hand

that the classical concerto for piano and orchestra may be regarded as his achievement." It was Mozart who emphasized the individuality of the virtuoso; who gave symphonic outlines to the form; who clarified the sonata-form of the first movement; who revealed the artistic potentialities of the cadenza.

The Mozart concerto usually follows a recognizable pattern. It has three movements: the first, a fast movement—expansive and of symphonic breadth—is usually in sonata-form. The second movement is of a cantabile character, revealing Mozart's incomparable lyric genius and his seemingly inexhaustible supply of beautiful melodies. In his slow movements Mozart often treats the solo instrument as though it were a human voice, making it sing an aria, so to speak, with the orchestra subordinated to the role of accompanist. The last movement, generally a rondo, is invariably sprightly, graceful, and fleet-footed.

### Piano Concertos

Mozart composed approximately twenty-five concertos for piano and orchestra (the first four being arrangements of works by other composers). On these, as Brockway and Weinstock wrote, "he lavished his most exquisite care and unstinted inventiveness."

H. E. Wortham has explained the beautifully adjusted relationship that exists between soloist and orchestra in the Mozart piano concerto. "Certainly it is amusing to trace the transformation which has come over the relations between the solo instrument and orchestra since the many aesthetic problems these present were first authoritatively set out by Mozart, who had to make his way in a by no means solemn world. We can hardly have a more striking object lesson in the decay of politeness than that contained in the chapter of musical history written by the piano concerto. . . . When Mozart established the type, he made reasonable concession to freedom. It was through his early concertos that he learned to handle the still refractory sonata form with fluent ease. But he laid down the canons of conduct governing piano and orchestra, based on the mutual respect arising from a well-defined comprehension of one another's functions, which his successors have never quite been able to enforce.

"In the well-ordered Mozart musicogony, both knew their place. There is no jostling, no shouting down, no recrimination. The piano does not cavil at the material provided by the orchestra; it can listen patiently through long tuttis, and never even clear its throat. Its good temper is unfailing; its breeding enables it to withstand the temptations of immoderate bravura; it indulges no mood to extremes. The orchestra, for its part, allows the preëminence of the piano as a general proposition, and keeps its own more unruly members in restraint. Etiquette may not prevent the bassoon from sly humour, nor the horn from becoming on occasion slightly sentimental. But all subscribe to a certain standard of decorous behaviour, and when we come to the end of these delicious finales which breathe the essence of the Viennese spirit, the

soloist, in Mozart's own words, may be sweating, but it will be with the gentle perspiration of the drawing-room, not with the dripping exudation of the arena. Our pleasure, meanwhile, will have been the result of listening to a flow of ideas, expressed with the polish of a man of the world who is also a poet with a twinkle in his melancholy eye."

### *Concerto in D minor, K.466*

Leopold Mozart, visiting Vienna in 1785, heard his son perform the première of the D minor concerto. "The concert was magnificent," he wrote to his daughter. "We had a new and very fine concerto by Wolfgang, which the copyist was still copying when we arrived, and the rondo of which your brother did not even have time to play through, as he had to supervise the copying."

The D minor is perhaps the most famous of the Mozart piano concertos, and—from the points of view of depth of expression and intensity of emotion—it is one of the greatest. In this concerto, writes Erik Blom, "he is the futurist composer, a romantic before what historians conveniently but loosely label as the romantic period. He even prophetically calls his slow movement a Romanze—in German, be it noted. He is in the mood already into which Beethoven dropped temporarily and Schumann permanently."

"The Concerto begins with a shudder," describes Mr. Blom, "and the first movement is full of unhappy commotion. Even the convention that the second subject in a sonata-form movement in a minor key should at first appear in the relative major and later in the tonic minor helps to intensify the drama: it is as though a false promise of relief were mockingly revealing itself as a tragic delusion. The Romance is in rondo form, with its beautifully suave tune turning up again and again. . . . The wild middle episode in G minor is like a sudden fit of raving despair. Even in the rondo-finale the music remains stressful. It has a kind of unhappy restlessness, relieved by a major second of ineffable grace. This again proves a delusion when it returns in the minor; but only a temporary one, for presently, in an enchanting coda, the music clears into D major and the second subject triumphs in a sunny outburst of happiness . . . with a supplementary phrase of the utmost good humor."

Recommended recording: VM-794 (Iturbi; Rochester Philharmonic).

### *Concerto in A major, K.488*

The A major Piano Concerto was one of the two wonderful works in this form which Mozart wrote in the year 1786, the other being the one in C minor (see below). In the analysis by Eric Blom, the A major "is sunny in the first and last movements . . . though the sunniness is by no means a mild sort. The music can scorch and sting at times. . . . The slow movement . . . is one of Mozart's most passionate expressions. It is in 6/8 time, a kind of tragic Siciliana. . . . The finale is irrepressibly gay, though not without that

after-tang of sadness which is always liable to make one suddenly feel that Mozart, even in his most lighthearted moods, is fundamentally never a singer of ingenuous happiness."

Recommended recording: VM-147 (Rubinstein; Symphony Orchestra—Barbirolli).

### *Concerto in C minor, K.491*

It is strange, indeed, that this work should have been written immediately before *The Marriage of Figaro*. For just as the opera sparkles with irrepressible gaiety, so is this work suffused with tragedy; in few of his works did Mozart speak so emotionally, and with such touching accents of sorrow. Though at some moments dramatic, at others contemplative, at still others nervously agitated, it rarely loses its undercurrent of prevailing grief. Comparing this work with the dramatic D minor concerto, K.488 (see above), Blom wrote: "Less dramatic than the D minor, it is more declamatory. It has a more classical repose of gesture, more poise and shape, more unity of atmosphere. There is nothing like the unexpected happy ending of the earlier work; it closes, as it began, in the dark key of C minor. The one resemblance is in the rondo form of the slow movement, with rather too frequent recurrences of a subject of very much the same type. There is no dramatic episode here, however, for Mozart takes to a serenading tone with concertizing wind instruments. . . . The finale is a set of very original variations on a shapely and sorrowfully elegant C minor allegretto theme. If tunes really can be portraits . . . this would be one of a well-dressed and perfectly mannered widow who lets the world guess her grief without consciously showing it."

Recommended recording: VM-482 (Fischer; London Philharmonic—Collingwood).

### *Concerto in B-flat major, K.595*

This is the last piano concerto composed by Mozart, and it was written in the last year of his life. It is one of the most magically gay and light-hearted of his concerti. No suggestion here of the autumnal melancholy that dominates the *Requiem*, composed during this same period! The first movement, Allegro, presents its thematic material in a long orchestral introduction, after which it is brilliantly developed by piano and orchestra. The Larghetto has about it an almost ingenuous simplicity: it is an Italian kind of aria of touching beauty. The Allegro is buoyant, exuberant, and full of fun, in Mozart's most engaging vein of joviality.

Recommended recording: CM-490 (Casadesus; N. Y. Philharmonic—Barbirolli).

## Two-Piano Concerto

### *Concerto in E flat, K.365*

In 1774, while he was still in Salzburg, Mozart composed this work for himself and his sister "Nannerl." Lyrical, graceful, good-humored, infectious,



it has all the seductive charm of Mozart's earlier solo piano concertos, with particularly apt writing for the two solo instruments. "The slow movement," wrote Blom, "is fastidiously ornamented, and the final rondo abounds in good humor. The way in which Mozart makes the cadential phrase at the end of the subject take different harmonic turns is irresistibly comic as well as infallibly artistic."

Recommended recording: VM-732 (José and Amparo Iturbi; Rochester Philharmonic—Iturbi).

### Violin Concertos

The violin concertos are not of the artistic caliber of those for piano; but at least two of them—the D major (K.218) and A major (K.219)—are masterpieces. "The best-known of the violin concertos," wrote Blom, "show the young Mozart as the impartial cosmopolitan that he was, in spite of his occasional avowals of Germanic patriotism. Next to Italian influences, unmistakably French models are betrayed by the rondeaux (so called by Mozart) in the G major (K.216) and the D major (K.218); there is even a kind of Hungarian gypsy music familiar in Haydn but strange in Mozart in the A major Concerto (K.219), and in the same work we find the mock-Turkish music of the *Elopement* and the A major Piano Sonata (K.331) anticipated. For all their slightness the violin concertos have a tender fullness of emotion which makes some of the slow movements unforgettable, and the composer's economy of construction is at times most remarkable."

#### *Concerto in D major, K.218*

Mozart's most famous violin concerto was composed in 1775, probably for his own use. Stately and eloquent, it is one of the gems in the literature for violin. The opening orchestral introduction of the first movement (*Allegro*) poses the principal thematic material, which is then assumed by the solo violin and developed by both soloist and orchestra. Two themes form the second movement (*Andante cantabile*), both equally beautiful and lyric. The first is introduced by the orchestra and repeated by solo violin. The Rondo movement, which brings the concerto to a close, is Mozartean in its deftness of touch and eighteenth-century grace.

Recommended recording: CM-224 (Szigeti; London Philharmonic—Beecham).

### OPERAS

Mozart was unquestionably one of the greatest composers of opera-buffa, and one of the truly potent influences in the artistic evolution of that form. No one before him realized so completely as he did the full potentialities of opera-buffa writing, or was able to endow it with so many different shades of feeling and atmosphere. By Mozart's time, as McKinney and Anderson wrote, the comic opera "had achieved a definite superiority over its ostentatious

predecessor because of its superior wit and sense of lively dramatic development. Here was a form ready for the vitalizing hand of a composer such as Mozart, its juxtaposition of elements from the classic comedy and its plot of inevitable disguise, mistaken identity, and the rest, with those of political and artistic parody and sentimental episodes, perfectly adapted to his naturally brilliant style."

Mozart's genius rests not only on the fact that he filled his operas with wondrous music, but also—in the words of McKinney and Anderson—because they were a "truthful mirror of human conduct. With all their eighteenth-century conventions, [his] operas are filled with real characters, each of them carefully delineated musically; they have dramatic continuity and climax; they are able to portray psychological motives of considerable complexity with deftness and surety. And they do all this without violating in any sense the principles of good musical form. Mozart did not hesitate to use all the means which he inherited from his predecessors—the aria, the overture, the recitative, and so forth. . . . But in using all these he was wise enough never to allow the dramatic elements to outweigh his musical necessities, as his great follower, Wagner, often does. . . . Without being in any sense a reformer, Mozart was able to achieve, in the words of Alfred Einstein, a miraculous harmony of profound dramatic truth and characterization with perfect musical form. It is in this that his peculiar preëminence and distinction lie."

### ***Don Giovanni***

In two acts, book by Lorenzo da Ponte, first performed at the Prague Opera on October 29, 1787.

The question whether *Don Giovanni* is or is not an opera-buffa has long been debated. Mozart himself called it a *dramma giocoso*, which seems to imply that elements of the serious and the comic opera were here fused. It has witty pages, playful pages, pages of bitter satire; and with these we have moments of moving drama and tragedy. Such an amalgamation of different styles might lend confusion to the attempt to label the opera definitely as either serious or comic; but it was characteristic of Mozart's genius not to write exclusively in one vein. Egon Wellesz emphasized this very point when he wrote: "Mozart was by no means the graceful musician of the waning Rococo. . . . He was a passionate composer . . . whose mood often changed abruptly from divine serenity to outbursts of bitter irony. Transferred into the sphere of the opera this disposition enabled Mozart to change within a few bars from a tragic situation into a comic, from a joyous, into a passionate."

Mozart composed *Don Giovanni* upon a commission from a Prague opera company. Lorenzo da Ponte fashioned a libretto from the escapades of Don Giovanni (da Ponte profited, in his writing, through consultations with Casanova); and this libretto stirred Mozart to swift composition. In September of 1787 he was in Prague with his score ready for rehearsals. On October 28th

he sat up all night to write the overture. And on the 29th, it was produced and took Prague by storm. "Connoisseurs and artists say that nothing like this has been given in Prague," reported a contemporary journal. "Mozart himself conducted, and when he appeared in the orchestra, he was hailed by a triple acclamation."

Don Giovanni enters the house of the Commendatore to seduce his daughter Donna Anna. Her cries bring out the Commendatore, who challenges Don Giovanni to a fight and is killed. The Don escapes without being recognized. The lover of Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, vows to avenge the murder. Don Giovanni's subsequent escapades include one with Donna Elvira, and another with a country bride after he has invited the entire wedding party to his house. Coming across a statue erected to the Commendatore, Don Giovanni mockingly bids his servant Leporello to invite the statue to dinner. While Don Giovanni is at his meal, the stone statue arrives and loudly orders the Don to repent or be damned. The Don mocks his guest; the room suddenly becomes black with darkness; and Don Giovanni is consigned to the fires of Hell.

"It is a very exciting opera," wrote Brockway and Weinstock, "with its many boldly delineated characters, the rush of events toward inevitable destruction, the shifting from comedy to tragedy with the protean rhythm of life itself, and the *bizarrerie* of the ghoulish finale. *Don Giovanni* was new in 1787—and it is still new."

Singling out the musical "marvels" of the score, Brockway and Weinstock wrote: "These begin with Leporello's famous catalogue of his master's infidelities, a masterpiece of *buffa* and bravura. Ten or fifteen minutes later, we hear '*La ci darem la mano*,' a duet of haunting, tender beauty. Almost with the profusion of *Figaro*, brilliant arias and dramatic concerted numbers follow. '*Il mio tesoro*,' with its tracery of florid melody, lays claim to being the most beautiful aria in the tenor repertory. But the most celebrated music from *Don Giovanni* is not vocal—it is the instrumental minuet that closes the first act."

Recommended recording: VM-423, 424, 425 (Glyndebourne Festival Opera Company—Busch).

### *The Magic Flute*

In two acts, book by Emanuel Schikaneder, première at the Theater auf der Wieden, Vienna, on September 30, 1791.

Only Mozart's genius could have transformed into a work of art the farrago of nonsense, banality, disorder, profundity, and Oriental and Masonic symbolism, which Schikaneder here built up from a tale by Wieland. Despite the confused and frequently unintelligible libretto, Mozart composed music that melts the heart with its beauty, nobility, and grandeur. It was Bernard Shaw who once said that the music which Mozart wrote for Sarastro is the only music which he feels could be put into the mouth of God.

Pamina, daughter of the Queen of the Night, is seized by the high priest Sarastro to be taught wisdom. Tamino takes it upon himself to bring the daughter back to her mother. Accompanied by Papageno, he sets out on this mission. While doing so, he himself becomes a disciple of Sarastro. After undergoing supreme tests for courage, he is accepted into the religious fold, and is given Pamina as a bride.

As Parry pointed out, *The Magic Flute* made Mozart "the representative of the German aspirations to have a national opera. . . . Mozart's setting was . . . mainly Italian in style, but he infused a degree of dignified and noble sentiment into certain parts of the work which was quite unlike what was to be met with in Italian operas; and in the end, between his music and the mystery of the play, the work became a spontaneous success of a pronounced description, and was taken up eagerly all over Germany."

Many are the magic moments in this opera! Besides the miraculous overture, there are the light and graceful "*Der Vogelfänger bin ich*," for baritone, the tenor aria, "*Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön*" (one of Mozart's greatest pages of melody), the Queen of the Night's aria, the Quintet, "Hm! Hm! Hm! Hm!", and the duet for soprano and baritone, *Bei Männern*," all from Act I; from Act II, the March of the Priests, the arias for bass, "*O Isis und Osiris*," and "*In diesen heil'gen Hallen*," the soprano aria, "*Ach, ich fühl's*," and "*Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen*," for baritone.

Recommended recording: VM-541, 542 (Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Chorus, and Soloists—Beecham).

### *The Marriage of Figaro*

In two acts, libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte, first performed at the Burgtheater in Vienna on May 1, 1786.

Early in 1783, Mozart met the poet and abbé Lorenzo da Ponte at the home of Baron Wetzlar. Da Ponte proposed to Mozart that they collaborate on an opera, and Mozart agreed. Not long afterwards, the famous Italian composer Paisiello came to Vienna, and in his honor his *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* was produced (for there was a *Barber of Seville* a generation before Rossini's). It was then that Mozart thought of setting to music the second part of Beaumarchais's comedy, whose first half Paisiello had utilized for his opera. The result was Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. Baron Wetzlar stood ready to pay the price for Da Ponte's libretto, and—after certain "dangerous" scenes in the revolutionary play had been duly rewritten—the Emperor consented to the production.

*The Marriage of Figaro* encountered cabals and conspiracies before it saw performance. Salieri, who was Kapellmeister in Vienna was envious of Mozart's gifts, and he assured the musicians and singers that the Mozart music was unsingable, and spurred them on to demand impossible alterations. But for the intervention of the Emperor himself the opera would never have gone beyond the first rehearsal. However, by the second rehearsal all the musicians

and singers were won over to Mozart's music. "Figaro's song '*Non piu andrai*' Benucci gave with the greatest animation," recalled Mozart's friend, the celebrated Irish tenor Michael Kelly. "And when Benucci came to the fine passage '*Cherubino, alla vittoria,*' the effect was electricity itself; the performers on the stage and those in the orchestra vociferated '*Bravo, Maestro! Viva, viva, grande Mozart!*' I thought the orchestra would never cease applauding, beating the bows of their violins against the music desks. The same approbation was given to the finale at the end of the first act."

At the opening night, reported Kelly, "the theatre was packed, and so many arias were repeated that the length of the opera was very nearly doubled. The Emperor himself cried loudly: '*Bravo!*' "

But Salieri was not idle. He prevailed upon the Burgtheater to present a charming and catchy little opera named *Una Cosa rara*, hoping through its popularity to check Mozart's triumph. He succeeded. *Una Cosa rara* was such a triumph that the Viennese soon neglected *Figaro*, and it was withdrawn after only nine performances.

Count Almaviva flirts with Susanna, the Countess's maid; but Susanna and Figaro (the Count's valet) are in love with each other. When the Count arranges a rendezvous with Susanna in the garden, word of it comes to the Countess, who dresses the page-boy Cherubino in Susanna's clothes and sends him off for the escapade. Figaro, too, goes into the garden—to spy on Susanna. The Count makes love to the one who he believes is Susanna, while the real Susanna makes love to Figaro. The Count catches Figaro and Susanna but, in the darkness, thinks Susanna is his own wife. Subsequently, the true identity of each lady is uncovered, and the opera ends on a merry note as they all go into the palace to celebrate the marriage of Figaro.

The libretto is a bit confusing and complicated—a far cry from the original Beaumarchais play. But in the hands of Mozart, an inferior libretto is transformed into drama; stock characters are given personality; an amorous intrigue is made into a thing of touching grace. What the text concealed, the music revealed. The music capers, leaps, sighs, frowns, underlining each character and each emotion. Not a false note, not an unnecessary melody! "Here," said Richard Wagner, "the dialogue becomes music and the music itself dialogue." Here was one continuous melody, beginning with the breath-taking overture and ending with the joyous chorus of reconciliation.

The most famous pages in the opera are the overture; the aria for soprano, "*Non so più cosa son,*" and the baritone aria, "*Non più andrai,*" from Act I; from Act II, the soprano arias, "*Porgi amor,*" and "*Voi che sapete*"; "*Dove sono,*" aria for soprano (perhaps the most famous single aria written by Mozart), in Act III; and in the last act, the soprano aria, "*Deh vieni, non tardar.*"

Recommended recording: VM-313, 314, 315 (Glyndebourne Festival Opera Company—Busch).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

*Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, K.525*

Mozart composed a prolific library of music in a lighter vein—Cassations, Divertimenti, Serenades. Generally, these works were written on order for some festivity or party at the palace of a nobleman, and their form lent itself particularly to Mozart's graceful writing. Some of his most engaging and light-hearted thoughts are found in these works.

*Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* is a Serenade, and it was composed in 1787—a wonderfully productive year that saw the birth of *Don Giovanni* and other masterpieces. Most Mozart serenades were in five movements, and it is believed that this work (which is in four) originally had an additional Minuet now lost.

The four movements are: I. Allegro—with the flavor of a march, though the touch is deft, and the principal theme is given a meretricious decoration of graceful trills; II. A lyrical and somewhat sentimental Romanza; III. Minuet, and IV. Rondo—the last two movements being the very essence of eighteenth-century grace and elegance.

Recommended recording: VM-364 (Vienna Philharmonic—Walter).

## QUARTETS

*Piano Quartets**Quartet in G minor, K.478**Quartet in E-flat major, K.493*

Mozart composed two quartets for piano, violin, viola, and 'cello. The first of these, the G minor, came in 1785; the second, in E-flat major, one year later.

Of the G minor quartet, Eric Blom wrote: "It is . . . a great work, worthy to stand next to the later Symphony and the string Quintet in the same key. There is a passionate concentration of thematic work in the first movement as well as an originality of invention and treatment that impresses the hearer at once and never wears off with repetition. . . . The slow movement ranks with Mozart's most expressive B-flat major love music, and the finale, in G major, anticipates the gracious elegance of *Figaro*. It is a rondo that confronts the hearer with the fascinatingly insoluble problem of telling which of its melodies, sprung on his ear with spontaneous nonchalance, is the most delicious.

"The other piano Quartet . . . although quite as cunningly laid out and full of enticing opportunities for each instrument, is not so immediately appealing, the composer having relied more on his unfailing accomplishment and his taste in applying stereotyped ideas to his immediate purpose than on

irresistible inspiration. There is, however, one incident in the finale so utterly bewitching that it . . . shows Mozart's amazing facility in treating whatever medium he chooses in the most perfect way imaginable, as well as his genius for varying a musical phrase with the lightest of touch, of modulating by way of a harmonic surprise and of going back to the original key in the most natural and graceful way possible."

Recommended recording: G minor, VM-251 (Schnabel; Pro-Arte); E-flat major, VM-438 (Monath; Pasquier).

### *String Quartets*

Mozart composed his first string quartet in 1770—in G major (K.80). Six more left his pen in 1772, and an additional six in 1773 before his full creative powers in the string-quartet form were realized. This does not mean that the quartets Mozart wrote before the so-called Haydn group (dedicated to that master) are negligible, but merely that the earlier ones are of smaller stature. In the early quartets we find already the felicitous writing of which Mozart was ever capable, together with a gradual advance in the quartet form and an increasing awareness of the artistic potentialities of chamber-music composition. In more respects than one, the best of these early Mozart quartets dwarf all other quartets written by other composers at the time (Haydn included). But the daring inventiveness which, in the hands of Beethoven, was to transform quartet-writing into a powerful and eloquent personal expression is first found in the "Haydn quartets" of Mozart—and it is this group which represents Mozart's supreme contribution to chamber-music literature.

### *The Haydn Quartets*

It is with real satisfaction—even exhilaration—that we recall the relationship of Haydn and Mozart. The unenvying admiration of each for the other's genius is, to say the least, heartening; and the capacity of one to learn and to profit from the genius of the other is one of the most delightful facts in musical history. After 1770—when Mozart was not yet out of his boyhood, and Haydn was approaching middle age—Mozart was inspired by the master's quartets to write some of his own. From Haydn, the young Mozart learned that perfection of form in which neatness, lucidity, and clarity dominate. The enrichment he brought to the form and ideas then influenced Haydn to a point where the older man's style changed—the point at which he wrote the remarkable "Russian" quartets. These, in turn, sent Mozart in a new direction, and it was largely the example set by Haydn's "Russian" quartets that impelled Mozart to write the six quartets which he dedicated to Haydn and to which he brought such daring experimentation, inventiveness, lofty thinking and imaginative technique. And once again, Haydn was influenced: the quartets that he composed after 1784 reveal unmistakably the impact which Mozart's "Haydn" quartets had had upon him. So it went, this mutual

enrichment; and out of it grew that glorious literature for string quartet which to the present day has remained a thing of wonder.

Mozart composed six quartets between 1782 and 1785 which he dedicated to Haydn. They are as follows: G major, K.387, 1782; D minor, K.421, 1783; E-flat major, K.428, 1783; B-flat major, K.458, 1784; A major, K.464, 1784; and C major, K.465, 1785.

It was at Mozart's home in the Schulerstrasse in Vienna that these quartets were first performed before audiences that included not only Haydn but also Mozart's father, Leopold, on a visit from Salzburg. The four musicians who played them included Haydn and Karl von Dittersdorf (violins), Mozart (viola), and Wanhal ('cello). "Before God, and as an honest man," Haydn is reported to have said to Leopold Mozart, "I tell you that your son is the greatest composer known to me either in person or by name. He has taste and, what is more, the most profound knowledge of composition." And Mozart was not yet thirty!

It cannot be said that others of Mozart's contemporaries were as perceptive as Haydn in appreciating the epoch-making character of this music. This "fruit of long and laborious study" (as Mozart called it) puzzled its hearers and caused no little dismay. "It is a pity," wrote one of them, "that in his truly artistic and beautiful compositions, Mozart should carry his effort after originality too far, to the detriment of the sentiment and the heart of his works. His new quartets, dedicated to Haydn, are much too highly spiced to be palatable for any length of time."

In these six quartets, as T. F. Dunhill wrote, "Mozart had passed the experimental stage. He had formed a style which must have been familiar to the whole world of music. His mastery could not be questioned. In these quartets each part has equal importance in the scheme, and the instruments are handled with an ease and freedom which no other composer of quartets ever achieved in quite the same degree."

Perhaps the most famous of the six quartets are the B-flat major (K.458) and the C major (K.465). The B-flat major is sometimes called the "Hunt Quartet" because the opening theme of the first movement has the character of a hunting call. The C major, undoubtedly the most provocative of all the Mozart quartets, is described as "Dissonant" because the first movement opens with strange chromatics together with a vague tonality. This passage represents extraordinarily modern writing, its unconventional independence amazing for the eighteenth century. No wonder the musical pundits of the time—and for some thirty years afterward—rubbed their ears with incredulity. Haydn, however, was much more tolerant, if no more comprehending: "If Mozart wrote it," he said simply, "he must have had a good reason to do so."

Recommended recordings: G major, C-LX24-7 (Lener Quartet); D minor, CM-462 (Budapest Quartet); B-flat major, VM-763 (Budapest Quartet); A major, CM-222 (Roth Quartet); C major, VM-375 (Pro-Arte Quartet); E-flat major, CM-529 (Busch Quartet).



*Quartet in D major, K.575*

*Quartet in B-flat major, K.589*

*Quartet in F major K.590*

The cool reception given to his "Haydn" quartets in general and to his C major Quartet in particular, kept Mozart away from the quartet form for a full year. In 1789, three years after Mozart had resumed writing quartets, Friedrich Wilhelm II, King of Prussia—an excellent amateur 'cellist—commissioned Mozart to write some string quartets for his use. Mozart, in sad need of some ready cash, responded to this invitation eagerly. The three quartets he wrote for the King betray, in two different ways, the fact that they were written on order for a royal patron. For one thing, mindful of the fact that the King was a 'cellist, Mozart emphasized the 'cello part in these quartets: the first of them, in D major, is actually subtitled the "'Cello" because of the predominating importance of that instrument. In this group, moreover, the daring experimentation of the "Haydn" Quartets yielded to the grace, suavity, and pleasing charm of earlier Mozart writing, in the composer's wish to please and delight his patron.

The "King of Prussia" group, remarked Dunhill, has "characteristics which distinguish it from the other quartets of Mozart in style. It is an optimistic work, sounding a note of earnestness in all its movements, but never touching our hearts with the revelations and deep feeling to which the finest pages of the quartets dedicated to Haydn give utterance."

The three quartets were composed between 1789 and 1790 and represent Mozart's last works in this form.

Recommended recordings: D major, CM-X53 (Kolisch Quartet); B-flat major, VM-407 (Kolisch Quartet); F major, VM-348 (Budapest Quartet).

## QUINTETS

### Clarinet Quintet

*Quintet in A major, K.581*

Mozart's Clarinet Quintet is deservedly one of his most famous and frequently performed chamber-music works. It was composed in 1789 expressly for the clarinetist Anton Stadler, an acquaintance who exploited Mozart's generosity in every possible way. However, if we must condemn Stadler for the many unpleasant moments his highhanded and unscrupulous dealings brought Mozart, we must be grateful to him for being the instigator for Mozart's best works for the clarinet.

To H. Ghéon, this quintet represents "the perfection of the intimate Mozartian art. . . . It was a prelude to complete deliverance. . . . Mozart was to allow himself one more half-confidential song, sad but luminous, plaintive but veiled in joy. . . . From the first bar there is nothing to jar, not a single gap, not a superfluous ornament."

Recommended recording: CM-293 (Roth; Bellison).

## String Quintets

*Quintet in G minor, K.516*

In 1787, Mozart's father was seriously ill, and the news greatly distressed the composer. Thoughts of death began to haunt him, and over his writings of this period a veil of gloom and melancholy descends gently.

The Viola Quintet in G minor is one of Mozart's greatest works. It is touched with an eloquent sorrow which is expressed poignantly and unforgettably. It is, wrote Dyneley Hussey, "the high-water mark of Mozart's achievement in chamber music. . . . With what mastery Mozart handled the . . . combination [two violins, two violas, 'cello] may be seen at once in the first movement . . . where the first subject, announced by the two violins and one viola, is given a deeper significance by its immediate repetition on the violas and violoncellos. But these technical matters are of little importance beside the dignity and pathos of the work which seems to be the unusual expression of . . . calm and noble thoughts."

Ghéon refers to this work as the "Quintet of Death." In an explanatory analysis he wrote: "The allegro accepts death, throws itself into it; the Minuet trembles, hesitates, and hides its fears in song, while the adagio looks it straight in the face and receives in answer the seraphic consolation which is an assurance of happiness. Then we come to the finale. After a magnificent prelude Adagio that speaks to us of the fullness of acquiescence . . . the allegro flies off. It is alive but slender, amusing but short . . . Mozart had had enough . . . He knew how to cry . . . but he did not like to cry or to suffer for long."

It is Tovey's opinion that the finale is an inadequate ending for a work of such grandeur, that here Mozart "for once" transcended "his limits." "The slow movement rises to a height not surpassed by Beethoven himself until his second period; an adequate finale is unattainable with Mozart's resources, and he knows it."

Recommended recording: VM-190 (Pro-Arte; Hobday).

## SONATAS

## Piano Sonatas

In Mozart's hands the piano sonata—he wrote seventeen—became richer and deeper in its musical content, more elastic in its form, and more sure of its direction and movement than it was with Haydn. As Niecks wrote: "Mozart is a prominent figure among those who developed the sonata form. He did not originate any of its main constituents, but he extended and improved many. His chief merit lies in that he drew, so to speak, with firmness and clearness the ground plan of the sonata. We might also say that he was the architect who completed the edifice which had been building so long."

*Sonata in A major, K.331*

This sonata is unique among Mozart's piano sonatas because it contains no movement in the "sonata-form." Its opening movement is a theme and variations—the theme being pleasing and graceful, and the six variations offering charming transformations of the subject. The second movement, a Menuetto, is probably the most original of the three movements, its trio being romantic writing suggestive of a later era. The last movement is, of course, the famous *Alla Turca* (Allegretto)—a march written in a mock-Turkish style which was then being adopted by so many Viennese composers.

Recommended recording: V-11593-4 (Iturbi).

*Sonata in F major, K.332*

This sonata, as Edward Holmes wrote, "is of rare beauty and contrasts a graceful and sentimental character in the melody with passages of great impetuosity and dramatic fire. The alternate agitation and repose in the Allegro, its uncommon melodies, modulation, and beautiful parts are . . . a characteristic Mozart production. The Adagio is an exquisite melody . . . The last movement is extremely brilliant, with fine melodies, spirited features in the bass, symmetry and character in every bar."

Recommended recording: VM-565 (Iturbi).

*Fantasia and Sonata in C minor, K.475, K.457*

This is the greatest of Mozart's works for solo piano, the one in which he approaches closest to the profound and dramatic utterances of his best concertos and quartets. The *Fantasia*, as Holmes wrote, is "so elevated and orchestral that the piano must be played in impassioned style." It is full of "fine modulations and enharmonic changes." Mozart was never "fuller of thought and feeling than in composing this opening movement."

To write a sonata to accompany this eloquent *Fantasia* that would not be anticlimactic was a task to test the master. Mozart met the task by composing his greatest piano sonata, which, as one unnamed critic said, "surpassed all the others by reason of the fire and the passion which, to its last note, breathe through it, foreshadowing the sonata as it was destined to become in the hands of Beethoven." And J. S. Shedlock wrote of this magnificent work: "The great man in the music makes us forget the means by which that greatness is achieved. The last movement is no mere Rondo, but one which stands in close relationship to the opening Allegro. They both have the same tragic spirit; both seem to be the outpouring of a soul battling with fate. The slow movement reveals Mozart's gift for melody and graceful ornamentation; yet beneath the latter runs a vein of earnestness; the theme of the middle section expresses subdued sadness."

Recommended recordings: *Fantasia*, Gamut 12123 (Aitken); *Sonata*, CM-X93 (Gieseeking).

*Sonata in D major, K.576*

This is the last piano sonata composed by Mozart (July 1789). It is extraordinarily rich in its contrapuntal writing, and sounds the deep and mellow note heard in the great C minor Fantasy and Sonata. The first movement (Allegro) opens with a stout and vigorous subject which becomes the basis for the entire movement, fancifully developed with the fullest resources of Mozart's imagination. A tender second theme (marked dolce) does not appear in the development at all. The second movement (Adagio) is one of the great Mozart pages—comprising a melody at once simple and eloquent, touching in its tenderness and brooding in its restrained sorrow. In the closing movement (Allegretto) we have Mozart in a sprightly mood, gay, effervescent, brilliant—at the same time writing music rich in polyphonic details.

Recommended recording: V-18280-1 (Arrau).

**Sonata for Four Hands***Sonata in F major, K.497*

Sir Donald Tovey termed this sonata one of Mozart's greatest instrumental works. It is "a superb piece of chamber-music in no way inferior to that of the great quartets and quintets of its period in Mozart's career." As a matter of fact, so rich is the material in this work, and developed with such imagination, that more than one commentator has suggested that it should have been written for quintet or octet. The opening Adagio is a page of majesty that one rarely finds in Mozart. Following this, the movement proper begins, developing two delightful themes with inventiveness and dexterity. Tovey has pointed out that the deeply effective slow movement (in rondo form) is one of Mozart's "broadest and most polyphonic designs," while the rondo movement maintains the ambitious proportions of the entire sonata with its breadth and robustness.

Recommended recording: VM-809 (Jesús María Sanromá and Mercedes Pasarell Sanromá).

**Sonata for Two Pianos***Sonata in D major, K.381*

The repertoire of two-piano music boasts few works so felicitously written for the two instruments as this one is. It has not the profundity or moving power of the F-major four-hand piano Sonata (above); but it is Mozartean magic in its feeling of spontaneity, in the ebullience of its spirit, and in its joviality. The first movement (Allegretto con spirito) is a spirited piece of writing, fluent in its melodic flow, dramatic at some moments and sprightly and vivacious in others. The second movement is an ingratiating Andante, of that serene and untroubled beauty which Mozart was capable of creating

with such an indefatigable pen. The last movement (Allegro) is a sparkling page of Mozartean joviality and good humor.

Recommended recording: Timely Set 3K (Kaye; Castagnetta).

### Violin Sonatas

In listening to these sonatas, it is essential to remember that for Mozart the violin sonata did not, except in his last few works in this *genre*, consist in an equal partnership between violin and piano. In these works the piano is the spine and the backbone, while the violin is but the external skin. Frequently the violin has no more important a role than that of obbligato: the principal thoughts are heard in the piano, while the violin supplies only a decorative figuration, or a chordal background.

Mozart composed nineteen sonatas for violin and piano, most of them characterized by his most graceful and felicitous writing. He was profounder elsewhere, more moving elsewhere, more personal and dramatic elsewhere. But for sheer enchantment of pure musical expression, there is nothing to surpass these sonatas. We are here embarrassed by melodic riches. What Dittersdorf said of Mozart in general might apply with equal force to his violin sonatas: "He does not allow the hearer time to take breath; for scarcely has one begun to meditate on a beautiful thought when already another magnificent one presents itself and supplants the preceding one."

Because they are so easily understood and appreciated—their lucidity of form and crystal-clarity of writing making them an open book for any who would glance into it—it is not essential to discuss the violin sonatas individually. The most frequently performed include the C major, K.296; E minor, K.304; F major, K.377; B-flat major, K.378; and B-flat major, K.454.

In a valuable analysis on the art of playing these Mozart sonatas, Joseph Szigeti has thrown indirect illumination on the style implicit in these masterpieces: "The Mozart player must curb all tendencies to overlushness of tone and exaggerated emotion; at the same time, he must keep both his tone and his emotional projection free of dry academism. Again, Mozart demands a very mature approach to the problems of ensemble playing, with its balanced give-and-take. More than any other composer, perhaps, Mozart demands a complete equality between performers, both in their musical outlook and in their playing, so that the beautiful clarity of his work is never beclouded. This wonderful, clear transparency of his writing is unmerciful to interpreters; defects of playing cannot be covered up by pedal, or any other of the sheerly technical devices which can often gloss over less-than-perfect work in other compositions. Hence, the basis of an approach to Mozart is a close analytic study, a measuring of values, not in terms of effect, but of an ideal of sincerity, simplicity, and clarity."

Recommended recordings: C major, K.296, CM-X143 (Milstein); E minor, K.304, 6-69005D (Szigeti); F major, K.377 V-15175-6 (Busch; Serkin); B-flat major, K.378 V-14326-7 (Heifetz); B-flat major, K.454, V-14328-9 (Heifetz).

## SYMPHONIES

"Mozart," wrote Parry, "began writing symphonies . . . at the age of eight, and some of his early work is skilful, neat, and artistic. But it was not until after his experiences at Mannheim in 1777 and 1778 . . . that his full powers in the line of instrumental music were called into play. The musical traditions at Mannheim were at that time probably the best in Europe, and their effect upon Mozart was immediate and salutary. For when he moved on to Paris in 1778, in company with some of the Mannheim instrumentalists, he wrote, for performances there, the first of his symphonies which occupies an important place in musical history. For artistic delicacy in detail, general interest, skilful use of orchestral resources, variety in quality and force of tone, no symphony had ever yet appeared which in any way approached its standard. But even this by no means represents his highest achievement in the symphonic line. The symphony written for Prague in 1786 [D major, K.504: See below] is a still further advance, and throws the Parisian one into the shade in every respect. The general quality of the musical thoughts is finer, richer, and more interesting; while the purely orchestral effects, especially in the slow movement, are among the most successful things of the kind he ever achieved. And finally the three great symphonies which he wrote in Vienna in 1788 [see below] represent the highest level in idea and style and in every distinguished quality of art he ever attained to. They are the crown of his life's work; for in them he more nearly escapes the traditional formulas of the Italian opera than in any other form of instrumental art except the quartets; and their general standard of treatment and thought is nobler and more genuinely vigorous than that of any other of his works except the Requiem. In management of orchestral effect these latter symphonies must have been a revelation compared with the standard of the works of his contemporaries and predecessors."

*Symphony in D major, "Haffner," K.385*

Father Mozart suggested to his son in 1782 that he write a symphony in honor of Siegmund Haffner, son of Salzburg's burgomaster, who had been ennobled. Mozart (then in Vienna) complied quickly, writing the work in about four weeks. When he re-examined the score somewhat later, he found that it was much better than he had remembered. It is, indeed, one of his symphonic masterpieces. If it has less breadth and stature than the last three symphonies, it is no less perfect within its own framework. It has great bursts of energy, as in the demoniac leap of an octave in the opening theme of the first movement (*Allegro con spirito*); a purity of conscience and a tranquillity of spirit, as in the gentle and lovable *Andante*; stateliness and the grace of the court, as in the *Menuetto*; and brilliance of color and agility of movement in the finale (*Presto*).

Recommended recording: CM-399 (London Philharmonic—Beecham).

*Symphony in D major, "Prague," K.504*

The symphony which Mozart wrote for Prague in 1786, and which was introduced in that city the early part of the following year, is—as Franz Niemtschek wrote—a true masterpiece “of instrumental composition full of surprising transitions.” It has a “swift and fiery bearing.” One of the most impressive sections in the entire work is the impressive Introduction (Adagio) to the first movement—sedate, elegant, majestic, a sweeping train of thought preceding the vigorous and light-hearted Allegro that follows. The slow movement is of a loveliness which, for want of a more effective adjective, we must speak of as Mozartean; the articulation of such beauty, and in such simple and pure accents, was one of Mozart’s greatest gifts and the one in which he was never excelled. The symphony has no Menuetto movement, but progresses from the slow movement to a delightful and jovial rondo built from three intriguing subjects.

Recommended recording: VM-457 (Vienna Philharmonic—Walter).

*Symphony in E-flat major, K.543**Symphony in G minor, K.550**Symphony in C major, "Jupiter," K.551*

These three symphonies, composed between June 26 and August 10 of 1788, are the last symphonies that Mozart composed and the apotheosis of his symphonic writing. That three such masterpieces, so fully realized, so perfect in details, and so vast in their emotional and aesthetic span, should have been composed within six weeks, is one of the phenomena of musical history, and attests more strongly than words to the strength of Mozart’s creative genius.

Edvard Grieg, in a little-known essay on Mozart, paid the following tribute to this trio of masterpieces: “They show the master at the height of his power. . . . It is difficult to decide which of these symphonies deserves the most admiration. We note at once the great step from Haydn’s to Mozart’s treatment of this the highest of instrumental forms, and our thoughts are involuntarily transferred to the young Beethoven who, without any specially noteworthy break, rises from where Mozart left off to those proud summits where none but he was destined to reach.

“In the introduction to the E-flat major Symphony, just before the first Allegro, we come upon harmonic combinations of unprecedented boldness. They are introduced in so surprising a way that they will always preserve the impression of novelty. The minuet of this symphony . . . has made the tour of the world. In the G minor Symphony Mozart shows himself to us in all his grace and sincerity of feeling. It is worth noting what astonishing effects he gets here by the use of chromatic progressions. . . . In the *Jupiter* Symphony we are astounded, above all, by the playful ease with which the greatest problems of art are treated. No one who is not initiated suspects in the finale,

amid the humorous tone gambols, what an amazing contrapuntal knowledge and superiority Mozart manifests. And then this ocean of euphony! Mozart's sense of euphony was, indeed, so absolute that it is impossible, in all his works, to find a single bar wherein it is sacrificed to other considerations."

"The three symphonies," wrote Donald Tovey in surveying the three works as a group, "express the healthiest of reactions on each other. . . . Consequently, they make an ideal program when played in chronological order. The E flat has always been known as the *locus classicus* for euphony; the G minor actually defines the range of passion comprehended in terms of Mozart's art; and the C major ends his symphonic career with the youthful majesty of a Greek god. Within these three types each individual movement is no less distinctive, while, of course, the contrasts with the individual symphony are expressly designed for vividness and coherence. Even in the treatment of the orchestra, where Mozart's material resources would mean starvation to any but the most spiritual of modern composers, each symphony has its own coloring, and that coloring is none the less vivid in that it is most easily defined by stating what instruments of the normal orchestra are absent."

It is generally accepted that it was J. B. Cramer who first called the C major the *Jupiter* Symphony to emphasize its godlike perfection. The name *Jupiter* was first publicly attached to it in the program of the Royal Philharmonic concert in London on March 26, 1821; and it has ever since been called by that name.

Recommended recordings: E-flat major, CM-456 (London Philharmonic—Beecham); G minor, VM-631 (NBC Symphony—Toscanini); *Jupiter*, CM-565 (New York Philharmonic—Walter).

## MUSSORGSKY

MODEST MUSSORGSKY, b. Karevo, Government of Pskov, Russia, 1839. He was first intended for the army, being entered in the Military School for Ensigns. After becoming an officer in the Preobrajensky Regiment, he decided to abandon the army for music. He became acquainted with Balakirev and Borodin, who inflamed him with nationalistic ardor and with the mission of writing nationalistic music. Under the guidance of Balakirev and Borodin he began to compose. The first works in which he revealed his individuality and power belong to 1867: a choral number, *The Rout of Sennacherib*, and some songs. His masterpiece, *Boris Godunov*, came six years later. He died in St. Petersburg in 1881.

EARLY in his career, Mussorgsky visited a Russian village where he saw the town simpleton make love to the belle. What enchanted Mussorgsky was the weird, haunting sentences of the simpleton, sentences which seemed to the composer to possess musical poignancy; and it is this experience that is



believed to have inspired him with the ambition to render actual speech into music. "What I want to do is to have my characters speak on the stage as they would in real life, and yet write music which will be thoroughly artistic." Thus he brought realism to melody, became music's first great realist. Discussing Mussorgsky's individual kind of melody, Paul Bekker wrote: "Mussorgsky proceeds from the sentence and structure and not, like Wagner, from the individual word. From the sentence structure he builds a sort of recitative-like arioso. For this construction, to be sure, the simple and natural singable quality of the Russian language was a prerequisite. . . . Mussorgsky found formal support for his style in Russian folk song, and for his treatment of speech-melody and of harmony in Russian church music."

He was not adequately trained in music, and the defects in his work are due to this fact. Often he had difficulty in putting his ideas down on paper. Coarseness, clumsiness, awkwardness were found in Mussorgsky's works by his contemporaries—so much so that, after his death, Rimsky-Korsakov and Stasov took it upon themselves to edit his works for publication. To justify Mussorgsky's technical shortcomings, Pierre d'Alheim wrote: "He did not want to increase his means of expression. He simply tried to translate into sound the soul's cries which struck upon his ears from without or rose from within himself. In very truth, he trampled on the rules and crushed the life out of them by the sheer weight of his thought."

He was a powerful and original creator, one of the greatest of the Russian Five. As Montagu-Nathan wrote: "Of the Five, he alone appears to have possessed the true seer's vision. His art is to be described as an expression of socialism in simultaneous relation to people and to music. In opera, as in song, he was a close follower of Dargomizhsky. His dramatic as well as his vocal works are informed by that steadfast desire for naturalness which Dargomizhsky seems to have been the first to awaken in him. Far more than either Balakirev, Cui, or Borodin, Mussorgsky reflects the spirit of the sixties in Russia; his works are in much closer touch with the literature and painting of that period. They show us that, although he was regarded with some alarm by his friends as a revolutionary, his ideals were of a kind that could not fail, when realized, to promote the evolution of the musical art."

## OPERA

### *Boris Godunov*

In three acts, book by the composer, after Pushkin, introduced at the St. Petersburg Opera on February 8, 1874.

For years, Mussorgsky had been eager to compose an opera which should express the soul of the Russian people, and express it through the new kind of melody which he was slowly evolving. His first experiment in this direction was *The Marriage* (1868), a one-act comedy based on Gogol's comedy. "If you forget all operatic conventions and admit the principles of musical discourse carried out in all simplicity," Mussorgsky wrote to Rimsky-Korsakov, "then

*The Marriage* is an opera. If I have managed to render the straightforward expression of thoughts and feelings as it takes place in human speech, and if my rendering is artistic and musicianly, then the deed is done." But *The Marriage* was only an experiment. With it, as the composer himself said, he had crossed the Rubicon.

Late in 1868, the year of *The Marriage*, Mussorgsky began to work on the opera that he felt would realize his ideals and aims fully: *Boris Godunov*, the famous Pushkin drama, which he himself adapted for operatic use. The story of Boris intoxicated him, and he worked feverishly. The composition, as he said, "went on boiling and bubbling" under his pen. "While I was writing *Boris*, I was Boris." It was a colossal labor of love and inspiration, composed at white heat.

In *Boris Godunov* Mussorgsky struck out boldly in new directions. His libretto was prose, not poetry, and his music simulated speech. "I foresee a new kind of melody," wrote Mussorgsky in defense of his idiom in *Boris*, "which will be the melody of life. With great pains I have achieved a new type of melody evolved from that of speech. Some day, all of a sudden, the ineffable song will arise, intelligible to one and all. If I succeed, I shall stand as a conqueror in art—and succeed I must."

But *Boris* was unconventional in other than melodic ways. It utilized an unorthodox operatic pattern. There were no major love scenes, no decorative melodies, no ballets, no exhibitionistic arias for soprano or tenor.

When the directors of the St. Petersburg Opera saw the score they were frankly puzzled by its new idiom and turned it down. The composer tried to placate them by inserting a few love passages and introducing some singable melodies; but even with this revision the opera was too unusual to be accepted. Not until 1873 were some excerpts from *Boris* heard. On February 17 of that year, three scenes from the opera were presented at a benefit performance at the St. Petersburg Opera. These made such a striking impression on the audience that it was eventually decided to introduce the entire work. Thus, on February 8, 1874, the opera was heard in its entirety for the first time. The critics were either apathetic or, worse, vitriolic. Laroche referred to it as a "patchwork version" of Pushkin, full of "coarseness and cacophony," with accompaniments that sounded like a "perpetual strumming on the piano, with the loud pedal down most of the time." Even Mussorgsky's friend Rimsky-Korsakov found in it more "clumsiness and illiteracy" than originality or genius. After twenty performances, *Boris* went into temporary obscurity.

After Mussorgsky's death, the score of *Boris* was revised and reorchestrated by Rimsky-Korsakov. In this new dress it returned to the opera stage in 1904, with Chaliapin in the title role, and proved highly successful. In 1908, Rimsky-Korsakov prepared a second revision, restoring some parts that he had earlier deleted. It is in this final form that *Boris* conquered the world of music. When, in the 1930s, Stokowski presented *Boris Godunov* in its original orchestration and form, listeners were in general agreement that though it had gained a certain refinement and artistic polish in the Rimsky-Korsakov

version, it had also lost some of its original strength and power. However, it is in Rimsky-Korsakov's edition that *Boris* is best known.

The opera concerns the tragic fate of Boris Godunov, who, according to Pushkin's drama, has won the throne of Russia by murdering the Czarevitch Dimitri. An obscure monk learns of Boris's rise to power through murder, and in order to avenge Dimitri's death he decides to impersonate the dead Czarevitch. Boris hears a report that Dimitri is not dead but is planning revenge. Stricken by remorse, Boris begins to be haunted by his victim's apparition. The pseudo-Dimitri, after a stay in Poland, where he makes love to Marina, proceeds to Moscow to claim the throne. Boris, driven mad by grief, dies in the palace.

In an admirable discussion of the opera, Kurt Schindler wrote: "With *Boris Godunov* a new type of historical opera was founded. . . . This is a work of simple and compelling logic by a master playwright, in which the great emotional forces, the revolutionizing sentiments of a period, are depicted through the medium of music. Not only was Mussorgsky a wonderful composer, but behind him lay the unexplored musical wealth of the great Slav nation—a mine of rhythmically and melodically unusual folk songs; of Byzantine church chants with their mysterious flavor of the early Christian period; of old bardic tunes, rhapsodical and full of grandeur; of new and violent vocal inflections rooted in the dialects of a rich and varied language. . . . In *Boris Godunov*, the people are in the foreground, the great masses are really the principal actor—at first dumb, oppressed, easily swayed; then stirred up, threatening, finally in open revolt and jubilant with warlike spirit. The intense realism of these folk scenes can be compared without blasphemy to such eternal masterpieces as Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. And in all dramatic music there is nothing so near to *Macbeth* as the specter scene of *Boris*."

The greatest moments of the opera are the opening scene—Boris's coronation, and the closing scene—Boris's death. Famous, too, are the bass aria "In the Town of Kazan" from Act I, and the Polonaise and duet for soprano and tenor, "O Czarevitch!" from Act III.

Recommended recordings: Symphonic synthesis arranged by Stokowski, VM-391 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski); Coronation Scene, V-11485 (Chaliapin); Scenes, CM-563, (Pinza; Metropolitan Opera Chorus; Orchestra—Cooper); Abridged, VM-1000 (Kipnis; Orchestra and Chorus—Berezowsky).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

(For *Intermezzo* and *Pictures at an Exhibition* see below: Piano).

### *Khovantchina*:

"Prelude," "Dances of the Persian Slaves," and "Entr'acte"

Soon after revising *Boris*, Mussorgsky began planning a new Russian opera. "It seemed to me," wrote Stasov, "that the contrasting and clashing of the Old Russia with the New, the passing of the former and the birth of the

latter, afforded a rich subject. Mussorgsky agreed and set to work with enthusiasm. His study of the history of the Raskolniky sect of Ancient Russia (the Old Believers) and of the chronicles of the seventeenth-century Russia involved enormous labor. The many long letters he wrote me at this time were full of details of his researches and his views on the music, characters, and scenes of his opera. The best parts of the work were written between 1872 and 1875." The opera was never finished by the composer, and after his death the finale and the orchestration were completed by Rimsky-Korsakov.

Both the Prelude and the Entr'acte of the opera have enjoyed great favor at symphony concerts. In the Prelude, the composer sought to describe a winter daybreak above the Kremlin. It is pictorial, suffused with gray and somber colors. Rosa Newmarch has said that "nothing in Russian music is more intensely or touchingly national in feeling." The Dances of the Persian Slaves take place in the first scene of Act IV, where Prince Ivan's slave girls perform a dance for him and glorify him in song. The music has febrile accents and is rhythmically cogent. The Entr'acte prefaces the second scene of Act IV and describes Galitsin's march to exile as the church bells toll lugubriously.

Recommended recordings: Prelude, V-14415 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky); Dances of the Persian Slaves, C-17286D (C.B.S. Symphony—Barlow); Entr'acte, Decca 25948 (Eiar Symphony—Ferrero).

### *A Night on the Bald Mountain*

In 1863, Mussorgsky planned an opera based on Flaubert's *Salammbô*. It was never completed, but some of the material was later incorporated in a fantasy for orchestra describing the Witches' Sabbath. Rimsky-Korsakov informs us that, in writing this fantasy, Mussorgsky was strongly influenced by Liszt's *Todtentanz* and Berlioz's *Witches' Sabbath*. "On the eve of St. John's night, June 23, 1867," wrote Mussorgsky to Rimsky-Korsakov, "I finished, with God's help, *St. John's Night on the Bald Mountain*, a tone picture consisting of the following episodes: 1. Assembly of the Witches, Hubbub and Chatter; 2. Satan's Pageant; 3. Ceremonies in Honor of Satan; 4. Witches' Dance. . . . As regards plan and form the work is fairly novel. . . . You do not know the Witches' Dance yet. It is compact and glowing. I think the form was the most suitable in which to cast the evocation of the pother. The general character of the thing is warmth; nothing drags, all is firmly connected. Please God, and you will hear and judge."

Rimsky-Korsakov revised the score and completed its orchestration, and in this new form it was published and thenceforth performed. The music follows closely the program appended to the printed score: "A subterranean din of unearthly voices. Appearance of the Spirits of Darkness, followed by that of Tschernobog. Glorification of the Black God. The Black Mass. The Revelry of the Witches' Sabbath, interrupted from afar by the bell of a little church, whereupon the spirits of evil disperse. Dawn breaks."

Recommended recording: V-11448 (London Symphony—Coates).

## PIANO MUSIC

*Intermezzo*

This work was inspired by a winter scene that the composer saw at his family estate in Pskov in 1861. One sunny day a group of peasants were struggling through the heavy snow and trying to extricate themselves from it—an attractive picture that fascinated Mussorgsky. "It was," he told Stasov, "gay and serious at the same time. Suddenly in the distance a crowd of young women appeared, singing and laughing as they came along the shining way. The picture at once took shape in my imagination; quite unexpectedly, the first theme of my Intermezzo was born, with its vigorous down-and-up, Bach-like movement; and the merry, laughing women were transformed into the theme that I afterwards used for the middle part, or Trio."

Six years after writing this work for the piano, Mussorgsky orchestrated it. Like all his other major works, it was reorchestrated by Rimsky-Korsakov after the composer's death.

*Impressions de Voyage: En Crimée*

Composed in the last year of Mussorgsky's life, this is the musical record of a tour that he made in South Russia. "It opens," wrote A. Eaglefield Hull, "with a Largo unison section in E flat . . . in which short fragments of a religious hymn are heard. This movement runs suddenly into an energetic dance of great individuality, working up to an exciting climax, and then gradually fading into the return of the first section." Hull suggested the following program for this music: "There is a rough sea. Fragments of a church chant float out from the Russian church in the village. Someone is dancing (probably in the market-place) a Russian folk-dance to the strumming of guslee [guzla] and balalaika. The dance comes to a close, the composer's eyes softly rest again on the uneasy seascape. Night falls."

*Pictures at an Exhibition*

So well is this work known in its various transcriptions for orchestra (by Maurice Ravel, Stokowski, Cailliet) that it is sometimes difficult to remember that it was originally a piano work.

In 1874 there was held in St. Petersburg a posthumous exhibition of paintings by Victor Hartmann, a friend of Mussorgsky's. It was to honor the memory of this friend, whom he admired profoundly, that he was inspired to write a large piano work about the exhibition. "Hartmann is bubbling over, just as Boris did," Mussorgsky wrote during the composition of this music. "Ideas, melodies, come to me of their own accord, like the roast pigeons in the story—I gorge and gorge and overeat myself. I can hardly manage to put it all down on paper fast enough."

Mussorgsky was as much a realist in his music as Hartmann was in his paintings. With amazing fidelity, the composer recreated in tones the sub-

jects of Hartmann's best canvases. The somber atmosphere of an old castle, or of the catacombs, is vividly portrayed in music with telling effect. The more humorous of Hartmann's subjects ("The Market-Place at Limoges," or "The Ballet of the Unhatched Chickens") found Mussorgsky's skilful use of rhythmic devices eloquently expressive of a needle-pointed wit. The majesty of Hartmann's "The Great Gate at Kiev" is reproduced in the spacious lines of Mussorgsky's melodic design. Music's power of evoking pictorial images is nowhere more brilliantly illustrated than in his set of musical pictures.

The sections of this work are as follows:

I. Promenade. This was intended by the composer as a self-portrait: "My own face peeps out through all the intermezzos."

II. The Gnome. The deformed little gnome of Hartmann's painting (believed to be a design for a toy nutcracker) is picturesquely reproduced in Mussorgsky's halting rhythms.

III. The Old Castle. A beautiful, soaring melody rises above a pianissimo subject for the bass to depict a medieval castle before which stands a troubadour singing his lays.

IV. Tuileries. The famous garden in Paris, playground for children and their nurses, is graphically recreated.

V. Bydlo (Polish Oxcart). Robust, vital, full of emancipated rhythms, this is one of the happiest inspirations in the entire work.

VI. Ballet of the Unhatched Chickens. A page of wit done with a brilliant flair for surprise and effect.

VII. Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle. Without any malice whatever, and with apt portrait-painting, Mussorgsky here describes a dialogue between a rich Jew and a poor one.

VIII. The Market-Place at Limoges. A deftly satiric depiction of gossiping women in the market-place.

IX. The Catacombs (*Cum mortuis in lingua mortua*). This music takes on a somber aspect, heavy chords alternating with light ones in this picture of the Paris catacombs. "The creative spirit of the departed Hartmann," explained Mussorgsky, "leads me towards the skulls and addresses them—a pale light radiates from the interior of the skulls."

X. The Hut on the Hen's Legs. This is music rich with folk-lore flavors.

XI. The Great Gate at Kiev. Music of majesty and grandeur describes Hartmann's sketch of a projected triumphal arch at Kiev and brings the work to a close.

The most famous (and musically the most satisfying) of the orchestral transcriptions of this music is by Maurice Ravel. This orchestration was commissioned by Serge Koussevitzky for the sum of 10,000 francs, and was introduced under Koussevitzky's direction in Paris on May 3, 1923.

Recommended recordings: piano version, VM-861 (Brailowsky); arranged for orchestra by Ravel, VM-102 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky); arranged for orchestra by Stokowski, VM-706 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski); arranged for orchestra by Cailliet, VM-442 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy).

## SONGS

The great fame of *Boris Godunov* and *Pictures at an Exhibition* sometimes obscures the fact that Mussorgsky was one of the greatest Russian song-composers, that cycles such as the six-song *Without Sunlight* and the four *Songs and Dances of Death* are undisputed masterpieces. In his songs, wrote Ernest Newman, "he coquetted with four or five *genres*. There are the 'patter songs'—the songs in which, as in *The Matchmaker*, he imitates the speaking voice, as well as the fixed intervals of the scale will allow him to do so. There are the songs in the folk style, there are the realistic songs, such as *The Goat*, and the songs that are partly patter, partly realistic, such as *The Seminarist*. There are one or two songs—such as *Tell Me Why, O Maid*—in the fluent conventional idiom of the West. Some of the songs simply illustrate the words point by point. . . . In other songs, such as *Gathering Mushrooms*, the Russian folk idiom at its purest is blended with Western form at its purest."

Discussing Mussorgsky's song masterpiece, the *Songs and Dances of Death*, Newman wrote: "The Russian sentimentalist of some of the other songs becomes the universal humanist—speaking Russian indeed, but a Russian that is intelligible to all. The songs are sometimes shapeless, but the primitive power of them makes their shapelessness seem less a fault than a virtue."

"Mussorgsky," wrote Newman in summation, "is at his greatest . . . when he seems to concentrate the character and history of his race into a page or two. . . . There is nothing in song literature more admirably shaped or more perfectly finished than *Gathering Mushrooms*; while in the *Sunless* cycle he is seen trying all sorts of experiments—some of them successfully—and giving all sorts of hints to future composers."

Recommended recordings: *Songs and Dances of Death*, etc. VM-636 (Gorin); *Gathering Mushrooms, The Goat, Hopak*, etc., Decca 1 (Rosing); *Song of the Flea*, V-14901 (Chaliapin); *Sunless*, Gamut 10103-5 (Rudinow).

# NICOLAI

OTTO NICOLAI, b. Königsberg, 1810. Studied with Berger and Zelter in Berlin, following which he published some vocal works. In 1834 he went to Italy where he was appointed organist at the Prussian Embassy in Rome. In Italy, Nicolai interested himself in opera, composing several; one of these, *Il Templario*, was a great success. In 1841, he became conductor at the Hofoper in Vienna, and in 1842 he founded and directed the historic Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. For two years, in Berlin, he served as Kapellmeister and as director of the Domchor. He died in that city in 1849, on the very day he was appointed a member of the Berlin Academy of Arts.

## OPERA

### *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

**I**N three acts, book by Salomon Hermann von Mosenthal, introduced at the Berlin Opera on March 9, 1849.

Nicolai's sprightly comic opera after Shakespeare is the one work by which he is today remembered. He composed it as a labor of love. "My new opera," he wrote, "has, in its composition, made me very happy. The happiest hours of an artist are those which he spends in creation." Though he completed the opera in 1844, it was not until five years later that it was first performed; and at that time it was a sensation. Although Nicolai was ill at the time, he conducted the first four performances.

"Nicolai works with . . . plentiful musical capital, both as to invention and as to craftsmanship," in the words of Paul Bekker. "He brings with him from Italy, above all, the urge to sing, which his work shows much more markedly than that of Lortzing. . . . All the characters sing in German, but their creator knows Italian articulation. He gives them a melodic line of such freedom, a *parlando* of such lightness, that the listener notices with astonishment how well the German language is learning to sing. But Nicolai is not satisfied with solo voice—he writes ensemble-opera, the first German ensemble-opera since *Figaro*."

Mrs. Ford and her neighbor Mrs. Page decide to punish Falstaff for writing them love letters. He is inveigled into a rendezvous with them but, hearing Ford return, he hides in a clothes hamper. The clothes, and Falstaff with them, are emptied into the river. Meanwhile, Mrs. Page tries to marry her daughter to a wealthy man, but the daughter, deaf to her mother's wishes, elopes with a poet, Fenton.

The overture to the opera is a classic of salon-music literature. Gay, sprightly, fresh, it is one of the choicest pages in the whole opera. Well-known, too, is the beautiful lyric romanza for tenor, "Horch, die Lerche," in Act II.

Recommended recording: Overture, V-12533 (Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler).



# OFFENBACH

JACQUES OFFENBACH, genius of opéra comique, b. Cologne, Germany, 1819. When fourteen he began study at the Paris Conservatory. In 1849, he became conductor at the Comédie Française. In 1855 he leased his own theater and there presented his opera *Les Deux Aveugles*. He achieved great success both as impresario and as composer of comic operas. In 1866, he gave up the Bouffes Parisiens, but in 1872 he leased another theater, the Gaieté, this time with disastrous results. He died in Paris in 1880.

IN a long succession of comic operas—the best-known of which are *Orpheus in the Underworld*, *La Belle Hélène*, *La Vie parisienne*, and *La Grande Duchesse*—Offenbach proved himself to be a master of opéra-comique style. Rossini once called him “the Parisian Mozart,” and the comparison is not altogether inapt, for Offenbach composed graceful music with something of Mozartean subtlety. Every effect in his best operas is artistically planned; the climaxes are evolved naturally out of the texture of the music; the harmonizations and orchestrations are exquisitely correct in details. Few composers have been so successful as Offenbach in the writing of witty music, music full of chuckles and ironic amusement. His best works sparkle with life, salty satire, light-hearted gaiety. Grove was right in saying that Offenbach’s music never fails in its cleverness. It may at times be superficial, but it never lacks adroitness or smartness. It speaks the language of the *boulevardier*, and in his tone of voice.

## OPERAS

### *Orpheus in the Underworld*

In three acts, book by Hector Crémieux, first performed at the Bouffes Parisiens in Paris on October 21, 1858.

Strange to say, Offenbach’s masterpiece—one of the happiest expressions of the opéra-comique vein—was not at first successful. The audiences that first witnessed this travesty on the Olympian gods—in which they are made to squabble, disport themselves, and generally behave like ordinary mortals—were only mildly amused. The piece would probably have been a failure, but for one fortunate development. The critic of the *Journal des Débats*, Jules Janin, decided one day to attack it as blasphemous, calling it a profanation of “holy and glorious antiquity.” Offenbach promptly defended it in a spirited answer published in *Figaro*. A heated controversy ensued, which—naturally—provided valuable publicity for *Orpheus*; and its fame and fortune were soon established: it ran for two hundred and twenty-eight nights!

“The score is full of sparkling wit and melodious charm,” wrote Gabriel Grovelz. “It is impossible to analyze adequately a piece wherein the sublimest idiocy and the most astonishing fancy meet at every turn. The overture is gay and lively. . . . The songs of Cupid and Venus are accompanied by the snores

of the sleeping Gods, and those of John Styx are masterpieces of fatuity and naïveté. . . . Offenbach never produced a more complete work."

As Orpheus and Eurydice are none too happily married, Orpheus pursues the shepherdess Chloe, while Eurydice is in love with the shepherd Aristeus (actually Pluto in disguise). Eurydice elopes with Aristeus to Hades, much to the delight of Orpheus. But convention demands that Orpheus pursue and reclaim her. Before Jupiter, Orpheus brings the charge that Pluto has abducted his wife. The gods decide to accompany Orpheus to Hades to investigate the situation. Pluto is compelled to return Eurydice to Orpheus, but the gods stipulate that Orpheus may not get his wife back unless he can reach the River Styx without once looking at her. Jupiter, himself now in love with Eurydice, hurls a bolt of lightning which compels Orpheus to look back and thereby lose his wife. Jupiter retains Eurydice as a Bacchante, and Orpheus returns to Chloe.

Recommended recording: Overture, V-12604 (London Philharmonic—Lambert).

### *Tales of Hoffmann*

In a prologue, three acts, and epilogue, book by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré, introduced at the Opéra-Comique in Paris on February 10, 1881.

Offenbach's "fantastic opera" was written in the closing years of his life. It was a child of his unhappiness: he was suffering from a painful gout and a harrowing cough; he was given to fits of melancholia and even to hallucinations. He was a "transparent, pale, sadly smiling ghost," convinced that he had wasted his gifts and his life. It was in such a mood that he seized upon the strange and fantastic tales of E. T. A. Hoffmann as the subject for his last comic opera. Kracauer pointed out that, in writing this opera, Offenbach was both putting his whole being into the music, and (in the Olympia act) portraying the vanity and false gaiety of the Second Empire.

## PAGANINI

NICCOLÒ PAGANINI, b. Genoa, 1782. Studied first with Servetto and Costa, and subsequently in Leghorn with Paër. In 1797 he undertook a concert tour as violinist in which he first attracted attention for his phenomenal technique. After several years of retirement, he returned to the concert stage in 1805, and from this time on knew an endless succession of triumphs. His phenomenal technique tempted some to believe that he was endowed with diabolic powers. He died in Nice, 1840.

### VIOLIN MUSIC

PAGANINI was one of the greatest violin virtuosos of all time, and probably, from the point of view of technique, the greatest. In his concerts he continually thrilled his audiences with his incredible digital feats on the violin. His aim was to amaze and electrify—and there is no question that he succeeded.

In writing for the violin, Paganini produced music expressly to exploit his fabulous technical equipment. It was therefore natural that most of what he wrote was showy and meretricious, glorifying technique for its own sake. Pyrotechnical effects are given preference over sound musical qualities. For these reasons, a great deal of what he has written is now in the discard.

But, in spite of his tendency to glorify pyrotechnical writing, Paganini was capable at times of combining technical wizardry with good music. His Concerto No. 1 in D major, Op. 6, has today the faded look of old-fashioned clothes, but also it has melodic charm and a sort of Rossini-like sprightliness. Much too attenuated and prolix in its original three-movement form (Recommended recording: VM-230; Menuhin, Paris Symphony—Monteux), it is today heard chiefly only in its first movement, either in its original form, or in truncated and skilfully edited version by Fritz Kreisler (Recommended recording: VM-361; Kreisler, Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy), or in the arrangement by Wilhelmj.

Besides the Concerto, Paganini is today represented at violin recitals by *La Campanella*, which is actually the *Rondo à la clochette* movement from his B minor Violin Concerto, Op. 7 (Recommended recording: C-68479D; Milstein); the "Witches' Dance" from *Le Streghe*, Op. 8; *Carnival de Venezia*, Op. 10; the *Moto Perpetuo*, Op. 11, which has lately enjoyed great popularity in transcriptions for orchestra (Recommended recordings: violin version, V-8866; Menuhin; orchestral version, V-15547; NBC Symphony—Toscanini); and, most important of all his works, the *Twenty-Four Caprices*, Op. 1.

In his best works, there is a great deal of good music. Robert Schumann held Paganini's creative works in high esteem. "His compositions," wrote Schumann, "contain many pure and precious qualities." Berlioz was equally enthusiastic about Paganini. "A volume might be written in telling all that Paganini has created . . . of novel combinations unknown before his time. His melodies are broad Italian melodies, but full of passionate ardor seldom found in the best pages of dramatic composers of his country. His harmonies are always clear, simple and of extraordinary sonorousness."

### *Twenty-four Caprices*

The *Twenty-four Caprices*, Op. 1—sometimes described as a "lexicon of Paganini's technique"—is the composer's most important work not only because it is brilliantly written for the violin and fully exhausts all its technical possibilities, but also because there is here music of originality and power. As Florizel von Reuter wrote, these caprices "reveal such a wealth of pedagogic lore, coupled with such inexhaustible fantasy and poetical romance, that they may be considered as convincing proof of Paganini's worth as a musician and a composer."

Brahms thought highly of the Caprices. "The Twenty-Four Caprices," he is quoted as having said, "are remarkable for originality of ideas and craftsmanship as well as for their exploitation of all the technical resources of the

violin. In my opinion Paganini's genius for composition was fully equal to his genius for the instrument." Brahms, indeed, composed a series of piano variations on the twenty-fourth caprice; so did the modern composer Rachmaninoff. Liszt and Schumann transcribed the complete set of caprices for the piano.

Recommended recordings: VM-672, 738 (Renardy).

## PALESTRINA

GIOVANNI PIERLUIGI DA PALESTRINA (born Giovanni Pierluigi Sante), b. Palestrina, Italy, 1525. In 1551, he became Master of the Boys in the Julian Choir in St. Peter's Church, and three years after this he published his first volume—five Masses. This publication brought him an appointment in the papal choir of Julius III. Subsequently, Palestrina held posts as maestro di cappella at the Basilica of St. John Lateran and at S. Maria Maggiore, assuming a similar office with the Papal Choir beginning with 1571. He died in Rome in 1594.

IN the history of music before Bach, Palestrina stands with Monteverdi as one of the giant creative figures. He was one of the foremost musical figures of the sixteenth century, and the greatest of the contrapuntists. It was he who brought the age of vocal polyphony to a magnificent culmination.

Cecil Gray divides Palestrina's lifework into three periods: "In his first book of Masses, and in several other compositions published later, but probably written about the same time, he appears rather in the light of a disciple and follower of the Netherland school. . . . They are highly complex and artificial, and as full of ingenious contrapuntal contrivances as the most elaborate productions of the Flemish school. His second period is characterized by a constantly increasing tendency in the direction of melodic suavity and harmonic clarity, culminating in the *Missa Papae Marcelli*—the most famous as it is likewise one of the best of all his Masses. . . . Finally, in the work of his third period, the formal structure becomes more concentrated and precise, the polyphonic texture still more refined and simplified, and the harmonic and melodic idiom undergo a further process of clarification, resulting in the formation of a style from which every vestige of the old Flemish style has been eliminated."

Palestrina was no revolutionist or innovator; he was content to work in the forms and idioms of his time. "We see no signs," wrote Richard R. Terry, "of his attempting to break away from his medieval system of tonality. . . . Unlike his English contemporaries, he tried no bold experiments in the direction of a newer tonality, and this contented habit of mind gives his music very frequently an uneventful character."

## CHORAL MUSIC

Palestrina composed about 950 works (a complete edition of his works comprises thirty-three volumes), including 13 books of Masses, 4 of Madrigals, 7 of Motets, and various volumes devoted to Hymns, Lamentations, Offer-tories, Magnificats, Litanies, and so forth. In all this wonderful music for unaccompanied chorus, the Palestrina fingerprints are recognizable. "The note of mysticism," wrote Richard R. Terry, "[is] always present. Serene, aloof, and detached from mundane affairs, there is no note of materialism to be found in it. When he rises to his highest flights, they are flights of spiritual ecstasy, not those of declamation or of pictorialism."

It is generally accepted that Palestrina's masterpiece is his celebrated Mass entitled *Missa Papae Marcelli*.

*Missa Papae Marcelli*

In 1562, the Council of Trent proposed a radical reform of Italian Church music. One year later, Pope Pius IV appointed a special commission to bring this about, and one of its first moves was to have Palestrina write a Mass that would be a model for all future church composers. Palestrina composed three Masses for this purpose, one of which was the *Missa Papae Marcelli*. These masses aroused great enthusiasm and praise. Pope Pius IV is reported to have said that the *Missa Papae Marcelli* was comparable to the music heard by St. John the Divine when he had his vision of the New Jerusalem. The work established Palestrina once and for all as the foremost church composer of his time, and his Mass was accepted as the prototype of all future ecclesiastical music in this form.

The *Missa Papae Marcelli* is the most famous single musical work of the Renaissance. In it, as Cecil Gray wrote, "the utmost sensuous beauty is united to a great wealth and subtlety of technical resource, without, however, detracting from the profoundly devotional character of the music." Here are summed up—to quote Lehman Engel's appraisal of Palestrina—"the loftiest ideals of Christianity in their purest and most selfless state—free of the earth, of man, of every soul-shackle, of every imperfection of the terrestrial life." It represents "the gospel of God; real, remote, though clearly accessible to lowly man; God surrounded by real angels, sounding real trumpets, cleaving the air with real wings—and all inevitably expressed in terms of the same kind of impossible—unimpeachable artistic perfection."

In 1565, Palestrina assembled five of his masses (including the *Papae Marcelli*) and sent them, appropriately dedicated, to the monarch of Spain, Philip II. Philip, however, rewarded Palestrina only with kind words of praise.

# PALMGREN

SELIM PALMGREN, b. Björneborg, Finland, 1878. Studied at the Helsingfors Conservatory, and later with Busoni in Berlin. In 1909, he became director of music at Abo. One year after this, his first opera, *Daniel Hjort*, was successfully produced in Helsingfors and Abo. In 1920, he visited the United States and was so impressed that he extended his stay indefinitely. Three years later, he became instructor in composition at the Eastman School of Music. In 1926 he returned to his native country, becoming one of the leading musical figures of Finland.

WHILE Palmgren composed two operas and many orchestral works, he is best known for his smaller pieces for the piano, and for a handful of songs, in which his creative talent appears to best advantage. "It is within a small frame that he expresses himself most happily," we learn from a brochure issued by J. W. Chester Ltd. Here "he reveals an individuality, a sense of proportion and finish that make one think of Grieg. . . . Palmgren's work, though uninfluenced by it, stands parallel to that of Grieg, with which however it has no striking idiomatic feature in common."

## PIANO MUSIC

Palmgren's most famous works for the piano include *Finnische Lyrik*, Op. 24; *Drei Humoresken*, Op. 26; *Ballet-Scenes*, Op. 34; *Finnische Suite*, Op. 36; *Mephisto Waltz*, Op. 37, No. 2; *Dance Piece*, Op. 39, No. 3; *Exotic March*, Op. 46.

"It is Liszt at his best [once again quoting from Chester's brochure] who seems to have inspired in Palmgren that exploitation of all the sonorous resources and technical possibilities of the piano, not for the sake of mere superficial effect, but because the instrument will yield its whole poetry but to those who know it most intimately."

The most significant trait of Palmgren's piano music is, according to W. A. Chislett, "the national note, many of the themes being actually based on the folk music of his country, while others are equally national in spirit, though they are purely the invention of his own brain. Such music are his two suites, *Finnische Lyrik* Op. 24, and *Finnische Suite* Op. 36. Palmgren, however, is not a slave of national tradition of his school, and has produced much fine music, very varied in its interest, which is characteristic of nothing but his many-sided personality. . . . Palmgren frequently uses traditional and classical forms, but does not hesitate to defy convention when necessary for the attainment of his object."

# PERGOLESI

GIOVANNI BATTISTA PERGOLESI, b. Jesi, near Ancona, Italy, 1710. Studied first with Santini and Mondini, and subsequently at the Naples Conservatory under Durante and Feo. In 1731, he composed a sacred drama which was performed at the Monastery S. Angelo Maggiore. The success of this performance brought him a commission to write his first opera for the Court Theater. In 1733, he composed his masterpiece, *La Serva Padrona*, and one year after this he was engaged as court musician by the Duke of Maddaloni. He died in Pozzuoli in 1736.

PERGOLESI was the creator of the opera-buffa ; his masterpiece, *La Serva Padrona*, is the first comic opera in musical history. Besides the opera, he wrote a beautiful *Stabat Mater*, composed in the last year of his life, a work moving in its reverence and religious majesty (Recommended recording: VM-545; Vienna Choir Boys With String Orchestra—Gombos). He also wrote some charming works for orchestra which are more pleasing than original or important. (The song *Nina*, long ascribed to Pergolesi, is not his, but the work of Legrenzio Vincenzo Ciampi). Pergolesi's style, refinement, grace, wit, and lyrical freshness are the predominating traits. There is an affinity between him and Mozart. This relationship is stressed by Paul Marie Masson: "One finds with each of them the same spiritual quality, the same nimble gaiety, or, in sadness, the same elegiac sweetness. And it is not only in sentiment that they resemble each other but in style as well. . . . There are entire pages of Pergolesi which one would say had been written by Mozart; there are the same melodic outlines, the same method of harmonization and accompaniment."

The modern composer, Igor Stravinsky, arranged several famous Pergolesi melodies for a ballet *Pulcinella* and a suite for 'cello and piano, *Suite Italienne*.

## OPERA

### *La Serva Padrona*

In two acts, book by Jacopo Angelo Nelli, introduced at the Teatro San Bartolommeo in Naples on August 28, 1733.

Though Pergolesi had previously written operas in which he interpolated brief comic intermezzi, *La Serva Padrona* was his first opera exclusively in a comic vein; and with it the history of comic opera (opera-buffa, opéra-bouffe, light opera, operetta) was launched.

The plot of *La Serva Padrona* is simplicity itself, revolving around only three characters, and without any chorus or ballet. Serpina, maid to Uberto, is weary of housemaid duties and is determined to marry her master. She concocts a skilful plot with the valet Vespone, a mute. Vespone comes disguised as a sea captain and pays court to her. This so arouses Uberto's jealousy that he asks Serpina to marry him.

*La Serva Padrona* once again makes us think of Mozart, especially the Mozart of *The Marriage of Figaro*. "Like *Figaro*," this editor wrote elsewhere, "its fleet dialogue is often punctuated with music that is always crisp, engaging, resilient. This music has Mozartean mobility. The spell of enchantment it creates is never permitted to break. There is an attempt at musical characterization; and there is also a successful effort to mould the musical resources of rhythm and tone color to the demands of the text."

Twenty years after its introduction in Naples, *La Serva Padrona* was introduced throughout Europe by a group of strolling players. Wherever it was played it was received with outbursts of enthusiasm. In Paris it led to a spirited musical war between two camps, one of them (headed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau) proclaiming Pergolesi's the true musical art, while the other faction championed French opera as composed by Rameau. However, *La Serva Padrona* did not leave Paris without creating one important and permanent consequence: the founding of the opéra-comique form, of which Monsigny was the father. Monsigny had been given direction and viewpoint by Pergolesi. *La Serva Padrona* also inspired Grétry to turn to this form; and Grétry, in turn, was succeeded by that triumvirate of great opéra-comique composers: Boïeldieu, Auber, and Adam. In Germany, *La Serva Padrona* helped toward the genesis of the *Singspiel*, the form which Mozart was to bring to so advanced a stage of artistic development. And in Italy itself Pergolesi's masterpiece became a favorite form of such Italian masters as Cimarosa, Galuppi, Paisiello, and Piccinni, who exploited it, and modeled their own works after it. Thus the comic opera everywhere was either directly, or by indirect influence, to be given shape and form by *La Serva Padrona*.

## PISTON

WALTER PISTON, b. Rockland, Maine, 1894. After taking music courses at Harvard University, he went to Paris where he became a pupil of Nadia Boulanger. Upon returning to America, he became a faculty member of Harvard University, where he is now assistant professor. He first attracted attention as composer in 1928 when Koussevitzky conducted his *Symphonic Piece*. Since then, important performances of his works by major musical ensembles have established him as one of the most important of living American composers.

NICOLAS Slonimsky has pointed out that Piston, in his music, does not seek new colors, rhythms, or harmonies. He is no experimenter, no blazer of new trails. Instead "He codifies rather than invents. His imagination supplies him with excellent ideas, and out of the material he builds his music without



words, descriptive titles or literature. He is an American composer speaking the international idiom of absolute music."

## CONCERTO

### *Concerto for Orchestra*

Piston composed this work in 1934, and it was introduced by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Koussevitzky at Cambridge, Massachusetts, on March 6, 1934. He strove here to write an orchestral concerto in the style of the eighteenth-century concerto grosso, with alternation of tutti and concertante. The work is in three movements, the first robust and athletic, the second a piquant scherzo, and the third, a passacaglia. "It utilizes," explained W. J. Henderson, "acrid harmonies and clashing chords in different keys, hostile lines of melody woven in counterpoint, and all the other devices introduced by progressives. . . . It is music of this time, vigorous, compact, straightforward, firmly knit. . . . He writes with a mastery of the basic principles of form, a clear and fluent logic of development, and a clear-cut design always easy to follow. . . . It is made with well-placed boldness and assurance."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Concertino for Piano and Chamber Orchestra*

The Columbia Broadcasting System commissioned this work, and it was introduced by the C.B.S. Orchestra under Howard Barlow on the Columbia network on June 10, 1937. Jesús María Sanromá was the soloist. In five movements, it is played without any interruption. In the first movement, the principal subject is assigned to the piano, after which it is developed lyrically by both piano and orchestra. The second movement has a scherzo-like character. A fugato in the wind leads directly to the third movement, an adagio in which the solo 'cello voices a beautiful melody which then undergoes a series of variations. A piano cadenza leads to the fourth movement, which is a repetition of material first heard in the first movement with new developments. The fifth movement is a variation of the second movement. A brief but effective coda comes as a summation to bring the work to a close.

### *Suite, The Incredible Flutist*

Walter Piston wrote a ballet in collaboration with the dancer Hans Wiener entitled *The Incredible Flutist* which was introduced by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra and the Hans Wiener Dancers on May 30, 1938. A year later, Piston extracted the best musical pages from this work and collected them into an orchestral suite. Since its première on November 22, 1940, under Fritz Reiner in Pittsburgh, this suite has acquired great popularity throughout the country.

The suite follows the action of the ballet closely. The village awakens. The merchants' daughters come to display the wares in the shopwindows.

Customers arrive. Suddenly a circus comes into town, with juggler, clown, and a flutist. The flutist is a particularly talented fellow, able to charm snakes, and even the snake dancer. He succeeds in charming one of the merchants' daughters. The clock strikes eight. Every couple can be seen, as romance is in the air. A prudish rich widow gives the merchant a kiss for which he has been begging for two years. They are discovered by the widow's lover, when the widow conveniently faints. The incredible flutist comes to the rescue by striking up a tune on his flute; the widow comes out of her swoon. The band strikes up a march, and the circus leaves town.

The orchestral suite, compounded of engaging and infectious music throughout, comprises the following sections: Introduction; Siesta Hour in the Marketplace, and Entrance of the Vendors; Dance of the Vendors; Entrance of Customers; Tango of Four Daughters; Arrival of Circus and Circus March; Solo of the Flutist; Minuet—Dance of Widow and Merchant; Spanish Waltz; Eight o'Clock Strikes; Siciliano—Dance of Flutist and Merchant's Daughter; Polka, and Finale.

Recommended recording: VM-621 (Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler).

## PIZZETTI

ILDEBRANDO PIZZETTI, b. Parma, 1880. Studied at the Conservatory of Parma, and in 1908 became a member of its faculty. In 1909, he was appointed professor of theory and composition at the Institute of Florence, assuming the post of director in 1918. Subsequently, Pizzetti served as director of the Milan Conservatory. Besides his active career as a teacher, during which he influenced an entire generation of younger Italian composers, he has been active in composition and has been generally recognized as the foremost of living Italian composers.

PIZZETTI's career can be divided into three distinct periods. The first of these is marked by the influence of Gabriele d'Annunzio, the famous Italian poet, who supplied him with the texts for his early operas. In his second period Pizzetti turned to the Bible for his inspiration and produced many works of marked originality and power which obviously are inspired by Biblical subjects. The third of Pizzetti's creative periods reveals the influence exerted upon him by old Italian history, events in which form the basis for important operas.

"The strong musical individuality of Pizzetti," wrote Henry Levine, "is reflected in an eclecticism that is a fusion of various periods in the development of music. . . . The neglected archives of the old Greek modes have found in Pizzetti an indefatigable resurrector. Their presentation in modern habiliments and with the appropriate richness of feeling inherent in them

eliminates any archaeological mustiness. . . . Nevertheless, Pizzetti is by no means imitative. His eclectic spirit has completely assimilated, in a manner entirely personal, all the elements that he has incorporated in his music."

## OPERA

### *Fra Gherardo*

In three acts, book by the composer, introduced at La Scala, Milan, on May 16, 1928.

*Fra Gherardo*—which was performed at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York in 1929—was inspired by the thirteenth-century chronicles of Salimbene da Parma.

A weaver named Gherardo rescues a young girl, Mariola, from attack, and takes her with him to his house. Having succumbed to her beauty, he repents, drives the girl from his house, and joins the order of the Flagellants. Nine years later, the weaver—now known as Fra Gherardo—is a member of the White Friars. One of his brothers, Frate Simone, inflames a crowd with stories of the miracles of their idol, Fra Gherardo. Fra Gherardo condemns Frate Simone for his lies and unfrocks him. Subsequently Gherardo arouses the crowd to attack and overthrow the rule of the nobility. Meanwhile, Mariola visits Gherardo, to tell him that a child was born to her and is now dead. Gherardo wishes to devote himself henceforth to her, but she reminds him that his duty is to lead the people of Parma in their revolt. Before Gherardo can do so he is arrested by the Podesta's soldiers for heresy. In prison he is told that Mariola is to be burned at the stake for her part in the uprising, but that her life will be spared if he will declare his allegiance to the State. Gherardo vacillates, then decides that he cannot. At this moment, Mariola rushes to his side to be with him in his last hours. Fra Gherardo is burned to death, and Mariola is stabbed by an insane woman.

"Pizzetti releases and intensifies the drama in baffling music," wrote H. T. Parker, "baffling because the perceptive faculties of the listener find no ready precedent for it. In retrospective reflection there is this source and that to trace. As stringently as Debussy, Pizzetti holds that in music drama there should be no songful expansions, no lyric effusions of emotion, with all else at pause. Rather, let the music publish and enforce the verse of the drama, phrase by phrase, period by period. With Mussorgsky, he agrees that a musical speech can compass the contours, the shadings, the emphases of the spoken word and so become semi-humanized discourse. With the Italian inventors and founders of opera—Peri, Monteverdi, and the other pioneers—he would hark back to a declamation that defines precisely the significance of the verse in a given situation. . . . At the outset, the absence of expanded and sustained melody is unmistakably trying—the more because Pizzetti's declamation undergoes a certain melodic heightening to make it a song-speech. . . . Sooner or later, the ear begins to grow accustomed; while the mind and imagination discover pages of this declamation not only significant of the

verse it releases, but poignant with the moment in the action, with the thought, mood or emotion behind. . . . Similarly with the orchestral and vocal streams. The ear sometimes catches in the orchestral voices a curiously subtle polyphony, a recondite shading of instrumental color."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Concerto dell' Estate*

Composed in 1928, the *Concerto dell' Estate* was introduced by the New York Philharmonic, Toscanini conducting, on February 28, 1929. The model for Pizzetti's music is the Vivaldi concerto grosso—particularly *Le Quattro Stagioni*; the *Concerto dell' Estate* enhances the old concerto grosso form with the resources of modern orchestral writing.

It is in three movements. The first, *Mattutino*, is constructed from five major themes, the first three of which are heard (almost simultaneously) at the very beginning of the work. After a robust and stout-hearted page of music comes a touching oboe solo. The fifth theme is largamente for full orchestra, bringing the movement to a sonorously impressive close. The second movement, *Notturmo*, opens with a sustained melody performed by unaccompanied violins. The entire movement is poetic, and closes with a gentle flute solo. In the third movement, *Gagliarda e Finale*, an ancient dance, vigorous and brusque, is exploited. The entire work has an impressionistic character, and is a most subtle recreation of the moods of Nature.

### *La Pisanella, Suite*

In 1913, Pizzetti composed incidental music for Gabriele d'Annunzio's play *La Pisanella*. Subsequently, he extracted the best numbers from this music and developed them into a symphonic suite which has since become one of the most famous of his works. "The suite," wrote Gatti, "contains the most important and vital music."

The suite is in five sections, to each of which Pizzetti himself appended a programmatic explanation, drawing it from the play of d'Annunzio.

I. Prelude: "Sir Huguet appears to be immersed in grief."

II. Introduction to Act II: "All the seamen of the Mediterranean assemble and move about in the port . . . A great mass of spoils is heaped on the flagstones of the quay . . . There also is . . . a young woman, white, almost nude. . . . Sir Huguet advances. . . . He recognizes in the young woman . . . the saint celebrated in the song of the beggar-woman of Arode, and he cries from the depths of his soul, 'Aletis!' . . . The woman rises suddenly as if she meant to run away."

III. Prelude to Act III: "Toward the north, the room opens on a garden full of red roses. . . . Seven Nubian slave girls stand ready for their work as harvesters. The Queen is playing chess with Psillude the Cretan."

IV. Dance of the Hawk: Pizzetti here retells the legend of Sir Frederic

des Alberigues who, having squandered his fortune to win the lady he loves, has nothing left but a hawk, the best hawk on earth. This lady, who does not care for him, wants to deprive him of his hawk as well. She tells him that she is coming into his hut to dance with him. Upset that he has nothing to serve her, Sir Frederic cooks his hawk and offers it to her for dinner. When, after dinner, the lady insists that she will not dance with him until he has given her the hawk, Frederic cries and explains to her what has happened. She rises to dance, and before her dance is finished, the living hawk is in her hands.

V. Dance of Perfumed Death: "I am intoxicated. I hear cries . . . I remember . . . I was tied by your hands—I am fettered again. Leave me, O Queen! I have drunk my fill. I am intoxicated. I want to dance."

"In these five numbers," wrote Gatti, "the composer exhibits a characteristic tendency to *dramatize* the conception . . . to assume the various themes as so many dramatic unities, as actual personalities taking shape and to present and contrast them, not by the mere play of sonorities, but through the expression of feeling and passions thrown into strong relief."

### *Rondo Veneziano*

Pizzetti has provided the following explanation of the *Rondo Veneziano*, which was written in 1929 and introduced by the New York Philharmonic under Toscanini on February 27, 1930: "This composition consists of three 'strophes' preceded and followed by a less extensive musical period in the guise of a 'ritornello' [refrain]: whence the title Rondo. But just as there are, in Italian poetry, songs and odes in rondo form whose strophes differ in content as well as in expression, so the three strophes of the rondo differ not only in thematic material, but in movement and character. If the musical period that serves as a ritornello (opening and closing the composition) be regarded as an expression of the fundamental and immutable traits of the Adriatic city, the first strophe might be considered an expression of aristocratic Venice, luxurious and pompous . . . and the third strophe an expression of plebeian Venice. The middle strophe is a sort of intermezzo, both idyllic and impassioned.

"The architecture of the work is intentionally regular and symmetrical. The length of each repetition of the ritornello is virtually the same. Both the first and the third strophes consist of two extensive periods equally long, connected by an intermediate passage. In the case of the first strophe, this passage has almost the character of a minuet . . . ; in the case of the third strophe, the connective passage has the character of a dance . . . as if an enamored visitor in Venice, emerging from a square filled with a roistering and noisy crowd, should find himself in a secluded piazzetta looking upon a small gathering of youths and maidens dancing to the sound of two pipes, an accordion, and a bass-viol under a pergola of grapes outside a rustic tavern."

## SONATA

*Sonata for Violin and Piano*

In this Sonata, one of Pizzetti's masterpieces, composed in 1918-19, he wished—as Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco wrote—“to give expression to a drama that could not be realized by means of scenic pictures, but which required vibrating and passionate instrumental voices to convey the intense sufferings of a tortured heart and of an awakened consciousness—the drama of the War. . . . His Sonata is the child of its time and embraces all the feelings of its period. And all those who during these years of pain have suffered, prayed, and wept will love this brotherly artist who has suffered, prayed, and wept with them.

“The three movements reveal three distinct soul-states which comprise the whole of the great tragedy. The first movement, *tempestoso*, sweeps us into a hurricane of grief; the human soul is torn in this furious tempest of all the elements and all the calamities. It is a grandiose and terrible vision, like those of Dante or the Prophets. There is no ray of light, no sign of hope.

“To this succeeds the ‘*preghiera per gl'innocenti*,’ the prayer for all the unhappy sufferers who, in the composer's own words, ‘know not wherefore they have to suffer.’ . . . It is not only a sublime page of music, but a veritable gospel of charity.

“After so much pain, a new breath of life returns, *vivo e fresco*, with the blossoming Spring. It is the eternal law of life, the law of goodness. Man gives himself up to the joy of life and the joy of nature; he does not forget, but out of his sad remembrances comes a hymn of faith which renders the rite of Spring more beautiful.”

Recommended recording: VM-615 (Menuhin).

## SONGS

Pizzetti's songs for voice constitute, as Castelnuovo-Tedesco remarks, “one of the most exquisite and authentic phases of his production. In this field (freed from the constraining demands of the music drama) he really found his most personal and most convincing lyrical expression.” Jean-Aubry singles out five songs constituting the cycle *Five Lyrics* which are among Pizzetti's happiest productions in the song form: *I Pastori*, *La Madre al Figlio*, *Lontano*, *San Basilio*, *Il Clefta Prigione*, and *Passeggiata*. “Had he written only these five songs,” says Jean-Aubry, “they would be sufficient to make the name of Pizzetti linger in the memory of those who love pure music. The melodic line of *I Pastori*, the truth of accent, the certainty of the declamation and the emotional atmosphere of the work, are its irresistible features.”

# PONCHIELLI

AMILCARE PONCHIELLI, b. near Cremona, 1834. Studied at the Milan Conservatory, composing his first opera soon after graduation. He became famous as an opera composer even before he wrote his masterpiece, *La Gioconda*, in 1876. But he never afterward duplicated the success of his most famous opera. During the closing years of his life he served as maestro di cappella at the Cathedral of Bergamo. He died in Milan in 1886.

PONCHIELLI is essentially a one-opera composer, his fame and success resting exclusively on *La Gioconda*. He was, however, as William Foster Apthorp pointed out, a composer of considerable creative power. "He was decidedly a man of genius, if of second rank. If he lacked Verdi's vigor of temperament, he had a fine dramatic gift, and his technical musicianship was rather in advance of his day."

## OPERA

### *La Gioconda*

In four acts, book by Arrigo Boïto, introduced at La Scala in Milan, April 8, 1876.

*La Gioconda* actually had two premières. After the first, on April 8, 1876, the composer—dissatisfied with the score—subjected it to extensive revision. In this new version (and the one which is known today) it was reintroduced in Genoa in December of 1876. A La Scala performance followed in February 1877. The triumph which the opera achieved at its second première in Genoa and Milan placed Ponchielli among the foremost composers of his time.

"Ponchielli's score," wrote a critic reviewing the first performance of the opera, "shows that he has fully grasped the poet's intentions. True to the school of which Boïto made himself the champion, and after many years of hard struggle, Ponchielli had endeavored to write dramatic music which being descriptive of the action abounds in coloring and instrumental effects. . . . *La Gioconda* is an energetic and laudable effort to infuse fresh vigor into Italian opera."

Boïto based his libretto on Victor Hugo's drama, *Angelo, Tyran de Padoue*, though the action of the opera takes place a century later than that of the Hugo play. *La Gioconda*, in love with Enza, offers to purchase his safety from Barnaba, the spy, only to learn that Enzo is actually in love with Laura Adorno. Despite this knowledge, *La Gioconda* magnanimously promises Barnaba to yield herself to him if he, in turn, will save Enzo from a threatened attack by Laura's husband. *La Gioconda*, however, commits suicide rather than give herself up to Barnaba.

Each of the four acts has been given a specific title by the librettist: Act I: "The Lion's Mouth"; Act II: "The Rosary"; Act III: "The House of Gold"; Act IV: "The Orfano Canal."

Unquestionably the most famous passages in the entire opera are the ballet scenes, especially the well-loved "Dance of the Hours" in Act III. "The ballet music is unusually good," wrote Streatfeild, and "shows many favorable examples of Ponchielli's fondness for fanciful melodic designs, a mannerism which has been freely imitated by his pupils and followers."

The opera is also famous for the alto aria, "*A te questo rosario*," and the duet for tenor and baritone, "*Enzo Grimaldo, Principe di Santafior*" from Act I; Enzo's Romanza in Act II; and the soprano aria, "*Suicidio!*" from Act IV.

Recommended recording: C-Opera Set 12 (La Scala Artists, Chorus, and Orchestra—Molajoli).

## PROKOFIEV

SERGE PROKOFIEV, b. Ekaterinoslav, Russia, 1891. Was a student of Rimsky-Korsakov, Liadov, and Tcherepnin at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. He was graduated in 1914 with three diplomas and the Rubinstein prize for piano-playing. He achieved recognition through a series of major works, including a ballet for Diaghilev, *Chout*. During the period of the Revolution he came to America, where he was commissioned by the Chicago Opera Company to write his opera *The Love for Three Oranges*. Subsequently he settled in Paris, but in 1934 he returned to his native land and since that time has been one of the leading creative figures of the Soviet Union.

ALTHOUGH Prokofiev's works have an easily distinguishable character, it is not easy to define. Irony, sardonic mockery are its prevailing moods. His melodies are frequently marked by a tripping, mocking figure which seems to give tonal expression to the gesture of nose-thumbing; and his discreet use of dissonance and polytonality, his pointed harmonies, his cogent rhythmic figures, all heighten the satiric effect. Prokofiev is at his best when he is mischievous and sardonic. He has an extraordinary gift for carving themes of sharpness and sting; his rhythms leap with athletic muscles; his music ever sparkles and coruscates. Neither sublimity nor pure poetry is often found in his music; sentiment is rare with him and he is ill at ease when writing slow movements. But for biting irony, his music is without equal; with him, satire and wit have achieved their most felicitous and needle-pointed expression.

### CHORAL MUSIC

#### *Alexander Nevsky*

In 1937, Prokofiev composed music for a Soviet film, *Alexander Nevsky*. One year later he adapted this music as a cantata for solo, chorus, and orchestra (Op. 78).



Gerald Abraham thus analyzed this work: "The first movement is a remarkable tone picture of the vast, empty Russian landscape. . . . The second, in which the chorus describes the exploits of Prince Alexander Nevsky in repelling a Swedish invasion (in the battle on the banks of the Neva) is less striking; it is virile, it is straightforward and thoroughly Russian. . . . The composer next paints the enemy, the Catholic Teutonic Knights gathered in Pskov. . . . The Catholic chant is given an iron cruelty quite foreign to the genuine music of the Russian church. . . . The fourth movement, 'Arise, O Russian People,' is a counterpart of the second—and a better counterpart. Its simplicity seems more spontaneous. . . . The fifth movement, the description of the battle on the frozen lake, is the most film-like; it begins with the dawn scene—the mail-clad knights on their mail-clad horses slowly crossing the ice as the sun rises—and depicts the course of the battle with considerable realism and modernity. . . . The sixth movement, the beautiful lament of a Russian woman on the battlefield at night, is completely on a higher level. And the last movement . . . is a fine colorful picture."

Recommended recording: CM-580 (Tourel; Westminster Choir; Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy).

## CONCERTOS

### Piano Concerto

#### *Concerto No. 3 in C major*

The most famous of the five piano concertos which Prokofiev has thus far composed is his third, Op. 26, written between 1918 and 1921 and introduced by the composer and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra on Dec. 16, 1921. Prokofiev himself has provided a comprehensive study of this work: "The first movement opens quietly with a short introduction (Andante). The theme is announced by an unaccompanied clarinet, and is continued by the violins for a few bars. Soon the tempo changes to Allegro . . . which leads to the statement of the principal subject by the piano. A passage in chords for the piano leads to the more expressive second subject, heard in the oboe with a pizzicato accompaniment. . . . At the climax of this section the tempo reverts to the Andante, and the orchestra gives out the first theme, *ff*. The piano joins in, and the theme is subjected to impressively broad treatment. On resuming the Allegro, the chief theme and the second subject are developed with increasing brilliance, and the movement ends with an exciting crescendo.

"The second movement consists of a theme with five variations. The theme is announced in the orchestra alone (Andantino). In the first variation, the piano treats the opening of the theme in quasi-sentimental fashion. . . . The tempo changes to Allegro for the second and third variations, and the piano has brilliant figures, while snatches of the theme are introduced here and there in the orchestra. In variation four, the tempo is once again Andante,

and the piano and orchestra discourse on a theme in a quiet and meditative fashion. Variation five is energetic (*Allegro giusto*). It leads without pause into a restatement of the theme by the orchestra, with delicate chordal embroidery in the piano.

"The finale begins (*Allegro ma non troppo*) with a staccato theme for bassoons and pizzicati strings, which is interrupted by the blustering entry of the piano. The orchestra holds its own with the opening theme, however, and there is a good deal of argument. Eventually, the piano takes up the first theme, and develops it to a climax. With a reduction of tone and slackening of tempo, an alternative theme is introduced in the wood-wind. The piano replies with a theme that is more in keeping with the caustic humor of the work. This material is developed, and there is a brilliant coda."

Recommended recording: VM-176 (Prokofiev; London Symphony—Coppola).

### Violin Concerto

#### *Concerto No. 1 in D major*

Though Prokofiev composed his first violin concerto, Op. 19, comparatively early in his career (1913) it was not heard until 1923 when it was introduced at a Koussevitzky concert in Paris, Marcel Darrieux as soloist. This is not a traditional concerto. There is no bravura writing for the solo instrument, nor any cadenzas. There is no exchange of the principal thematic material between soloist and orchestra. The orchestra, finally, serves a much more important role than that of accompaniment; it is treated symphonically, and very often it is the orchestra that has the principal thematic material, while the violin decorates the melody with figurations.

The concerto is in three movements, which are usually played uninterruptedly. The first movement, *Andantino*, opens with a contemplative subject stated by the solo violin; the entire movement is of a plaintive character. The *Scherzo* has the flash of lightning,—capricious and whimsical in mood—while the last movement (*Moderato*) is broadly lyrical. The concerto closes as it opened, with the contemplative subject.

Recommended recording: CM-244 (Szigeti; London Philharmonic—Beecham).

### OPERA

#### *The Love for Three Oranges*

In prologue and four acts, book by the composer, first performance at the Chicago Opera on December 30, 1921.

Prokofiev drew the libretto for his opera from a "fiaba" of Carlo Gozzi, who wrote this play in Vienna in 1761 to mock two popular Venetian authors then monopolizing the stage—Chari and Goldoni.

A witch's curse has fallen on the son of King Trifle: He will never be happy unless he falls in love with three oranges, and has his love reciprocated.

cated. The Prince consequently goes in search of three oranges. He finds them in the desert. Each orange has within it a beautiful princess, two of them dead from thirst, the third still alive. The Prince brings back the third princess to his palace, where a new curse by the witch transforms her into a rat. When the witch falls through a trap into Hell, the curses are lifted—and the Prince and Princess find happiness together.

For this charming piece, Prokofiev produced one of his wittiest scores. He has rarely been more audacious in concocting sparkling theatrical effects in music, or in conceiving melodies of impudent flippancy.

"This opera," wrote Sabaneyev, "is a splendid and exceedingly witty composition. The symphonism of operatic style, first introduced by Wagner into opera and firmly established there, calls forth a reaction on Prokofiev's part. . . . Prokofiev's opera is full of peculiar theatricalism, but remains musical at the same time. The composer has successfully, though on a wholly different plane, found the synthesis of stage and music which has for so long been sought by theoreticians. . . . The opera is the only one on the operatic horizon of the present day . . . to offer a striking solution for this troublesome operatic problem."

The "Scherzo" and the "March" from *The Love for Three Oranges* have achieved outstanding success in orchestral concerts. Besides these, the finest pages include the "Laughing Song" and the duet between the Prince and Princess, "Thank You, My Prince."

Prokofiev has arranged an effective orchestral suite from the opera's most admirable passages (Op. 33a). This suite has six sections: I. "*Les Ridicules*"; II. "*Scène infernale*"; III. "*Marche*"; IV. "*Scherzo*"; V. "*Le Prince et la princesse*"; VI. "*La Fuite*."

Recommended recordings: *Scène infernale, Marche, and Scherzo*, V-9128 (London Symphony—Coates); *The Prince and the Princess*, V-18497 (NBC Symphony—Stokowski).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *The Age of Steel*

In June of 1927, Diaghilev and the Ballet Russe presented Prokofiev's ballet *Le Pas d'Acier* (The Age of Steel), Op. 46, in Paris. It was coldly received, and not until a month later—in London—was the work successful.

Here Prokofiev pays tribute to the Soviet Union. His music is dedicated to a new concept of values in which labor and the factory are glorified. In a strident score, constructed out of muscle and sinew, he describes the bolt as "more beautiful than the rose," and the machine as more awe-inspiring than Nature.

Henri Prunières said of this work: "The whole score is tense, as a steel spring is tense, revealing a variety of rhythms, an extraordinary richness of melodic material, and a faculty of invention which is constantly renewed without apparent effort."

From the score of this ballet, Prokofiev drew ten effective numbers for an orchestral suite, Op. 41.

Recommended recording: orchestral suite, V-11446-7 (London Symphony—Coates).

### *Chout*

Prokofiev composed his ballet *Chout*, Op. 21, in 1915, but it was not until May 17, 1921 that it was finally presented by Diaghilev's Ballet Russe at the Théâtre de la Gaîté. The whimsical story, derived from a folk tale of the Archangel region—depicting the mad exploits of a buffoon—find marvelous expression in Prokofiev's whimsical and highly spiced musical score. *Chout* was a mild success in Paris, but in London it was severely attacked.

"*Chout*," wrote P. O. Ferroud, "is not to be considered popular music in the manner of the Russian composers who borrow constantly from folk tales; but the story of the jester and his mate is drawn so directly from primitive art that it cannot belie its sources. Nevertheless, unlike so many other ballets, this one might be styled anti-magical. It suggests the people at every turn, but a people of realist and skeptical outlook, who refuse to believe, even when confronted by a moral fable, that the miraculous is possible. . . . The burlesque effect is produced precisely because the jester knows the limits of his trickery, and his comrades do not. And the music refuses to help us. Full of life, mockery, and caprice, the music enjoys the fun just as we do and only intensifies its truculence."

The orchestral suite which Prokofiev developed from the music to the ballet includes twelve numbers: I. The Buffoon and His Wife (Andanté scherzando); II. Dance of the Buffoon's Wife (Andantino allegretto, ma non troppo); III. The Buffoons Kill Their Wives (Fugue; Allegro sostenuto; Vivace); IV. The Buffoon Masquerades as a Young Girl (Andante innocente); V. Third Entr'acte (Un poco andante); VI. Dance of the Buffoon's Daughters (Moderato scherzando; Vivace); VII. The Arrival of the Merchant, Dance of Obeisance, and Choice of the Fiancée (Andante gravissimo; Andantino; Allegretto espressivo; Andante maestoso); VIII. In the Bedroom of the Merchant (Moderato tranquillo); IX. The Young Girl is Transformed into a Goat (Moderato con agitazione); X. Fifth entr'acte, and Burial of the Goat (Lento con tristezza); XI. The Quarrel of the Buffoon and the Merchant (Allegro marziale); XII. Final Dance (Moderato; Allegro).

### *Lieutenant Kije*

The suite from *Lieutenant Kije*, Op. 60, comprises some of the music that Prokofiev wrote for the motion picture of the same name. Slonimsky has summarized the film's plot as follows: "The subject of the film is based on an anecdote about the Emperor Paul, who misread the report of his military aide so that the last syllable of the name of a Russian officer which ended with 'ki' and the Russian intensive expletive 'je' (untranslatable by any English

word but similar in position and meaning to the Latin 'quidem') formed a non-existent name, Kije. The obsequious courtiers, fearful of pointing out to the Czar the mistake he had made, decided to invent an officer of that name (as misread by the Czar). Hence all kinds of comical adventures and quid-pro-quo's."

A farcical subject like this lends itself extraordinarily well to Prokofiev's keenly satirical and acid manner. The suite includes the following sections: I. The Birth of Kije (the stupid and vulgar fellow brilliantly and wittily characterized in equally pompous and vulgar music); II. Romance; III. Kije's Wedding; IV. Troika; V. Burial of Kije.

Recommended recording: VM-459 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

### *Peter and the Wolf*

Prokofiev composed this "symphonic tale for orchestra," Op. 67, to teach children through a fairy tale the instruments of the orchestra. The narrator tells a fairy tale, whose several characters are interpreted musically by motives which run throughout the composition. Prokofiev composed this work in 1936 and it was produced at the Children's Theater in Moscow.

"It introduces a narrator," explains Slonimsky, "telling the story of the Red Pioneer, Peter, who, over the objection of a grouchy grandfather, sets forth on the adventure of conquering the Russian equivalent of the Big Bad Wolf. Peter is aided by a bird, a cat, and a duck, but while using them as allies, he has to be on the lookout for the cat, who has designs on the bird. The duck eventually falls victim to the wolf, but remains alive in the wolf's belly, while the wolf is being triumphantly carried off to the zoo. The interesting feature of this work is the use of instrumental *leitmotives*, so that the grandfather is portrayed by a bassoon, the bird by a flute, the cat by a clarinet, the wolf by horns, and Peter by a romantically adventurous theme in the strings. The principle of literal illustration is here carried to its ultimate clarity. In fact the device is elementary, and no attempt is made to Wagnerize the procedure. The narrator tells the story, and with every mention of the principals, an instrument plays the corresponding motif. Naturally, the music finds great favor among Russian children. It is remarkable, however, that it has become an outstanding success with the sophisticated symphony audiences in America."

*Peter and the Wolf* was first performed in Moscow on May 2, 1936, and its American première took place on March 25, 1938, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Koussevitzky.

Recommended recording: VM-566 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

### *Russian Overture*

Composed in 1936, the *Russian Overture*, Op. 72, was introduced at the end of the same year in Moscow under the baton of Eugene Szenkar. It opens

with an Allegro con brio, following which there appears a simple, folklike melody played by oboe and horns. This is the principal subject of the overture; a subsidiary subject, tranquil and of a graceful fluidity, is given cantabile to strings and horns. The development of both themes is varied and astute, and the entire overture ends triumphantly with a majestic restatement of the opening melody.

### *Scythian Suite*

While visiting London in 1914 Prokofiev met Diaghilev, who commissioned him to prepare a ballet for the Ballet Russe. Prokofiev selected for his subject the prehistoric nomads who roamed the Ukrainian steppes, the Scythians. The ballet was completed at the close of 1914, but Diaghilev felt that the subject was unsuitable for ballet purposes, though he found the music admirable. Prokofiev then decided to revamp his music into an orchestral suite. Now entitled *Scythian Suite: Ala and Lolli*, Op. 20, it was introduced under the composer's direction at the Maryinski Theater in St. Petersburg on January 20, 1916.

The novel and adventurous music puzzled the audience. Glazunov fled from the hall in horror, cupping the palms of his hands over his ears to deafen them to Prokofiev's dissonances. One of the violinists of the orchestra was overheard by Prokofiev to say to a friend: "My wife is sick and I've got to buy some medicine. Otherwise I wouldn't play this crazy music!" One of the leading critics of Moscow was trapped by the work into making a fatal blunder. He viciously attacked the music for its barbarism, concluding his review with the statement: "The composer himself conducted the work with barbaric abandon." However, the critic had written the review without attending the concert, and he did not know that the concert itself had been postponed for a few days. The manuscript score was in the hands of the composer, so that the critic could not possibly have seen it. This incident—which was given considerable publicity at the time—not only created a great deal of amusement but also stimulated fresh interest in the composer.

The suite is in four sections: I. Invocation to Veles and Ala (Allegro feroce). This is an invocation to the sun (Veles) who is worshipped by the Scythians. This is followed by a sacrifice to the idol Ala, daughter of Veles.

II. The Evil God and Dance of Pagan Monsters (Allegro sostenuto).

III. Night (Andantino). The Evil God attacks Ala in the darkness. The rays of the moon fall on Ala, and the moon-maidens come down to console her.

IV. Lola's Pursuit of the Evil God and the Sunrise (Tempestuoso). The Scythian Hero, Lolli, goes forth to save Ala. He fights the Evil God and is about to be vanquished by him when the Sun God rises with the passing of the night to smite the Evil God.

## PIANO MUSIC

Prokofiev—himself a fine concert pianist—has written brilliantly and wittily for the piano. He has a wide range of colors, a mastery of piano style, and the power to make piano tones express mockery. He can also, in his pieces, etch a variety of moods ranging from the cheerful to the pensive and the gentle. His best piano works include the Sonata, Op. 29, whose first movement is one of the most original and inspired pages of piano music in our time; and a set of exquisite piano miniatures called *Visions fugitives*, Op. 22. The *Suggestion diabolique*, Op. 4, No. 4 (in Prokofiev's characteristic satiric vein) and the *Second Gavotte*, Op. 25 (which Prokofiev appropriated later for his orchestral *Classical Symphony*) are also well known.

## SYMPHONY

*Classical Symphony*

The *Classical Symphony in D major*, Op. 25, is an interesting experiment. Within the framework of the Mozartean symphony (and with the same instrumentation), Prokofiev wrote a work which, though eighteenth-century in form, is twentieth-century in its idiom. The hand may be the hand of the classicist, but the voice is undoubtedly the voice of Prokofiev. No mistaking those clipped phrases, those mocking themes, those capricious rhythms, those piquant insolent gestures which appear and reappear throughout the work! The symphony is in four movements, and is marked by a remarkable economy of material and gift for condensation: the entire work requires only thirteen minutes for performance. Lucidly written with a gay and sprightly pen, it requires no analysis or program. The movements are entitled: Allegro; Larghetto; Gavotte; and Finale.

It may be remarked that this work was written long before contemporary composers decided to retrace their steps and to look to the past for inspiration and idioms. Thus, in this work, Prokofiev may be said to have begun the neo-classical movement that swept the world of modern music soon after World War I.

Recommended recording: CM-X.166 (Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra—Mitropoulos).

# Puccini

GIACOMO PUCCINI, b. Lucca, 1858. Studied at the Milan Conservatory, and while still a student composed *Capriccio Sinfonico* which was performed and published. His first opera was *Le Villi*, successfully performed at the Theatre dal Verme in Milan in 1884. With *Manon Lescaut* (1893) Puccini achieved world fame as an operatic composer, fame which he retained to the end of his life with a series of operatic masterpieces. In 1907, Puccini visited the United States to attend the American première of *Madama Butterfly*. While here, he was commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera House to compose a work expressly for that theater. The opera was *The Girl of the Golden West*, based on the famous play of David Belasco. Puccini's last opera, *Turandot*, was completed by Franco Alfano. Puccini died in Brussels in 1924.

Puccini was the successor of Verdi as the foremost composer of Italian opera. No one questions his membership in that imperial dynasty of Italian opera composers which began with Monteverdi, and of which he may thus far be said to be the last representative. Together with the Italian gift for melody, he had nobility, taste, and a sense of theater. Without sacrificing his lyric flow, he knew how to make his music dramatic and atmospheric.

Richard Specht has emphasized that a fastidious delicacy, the "quintessence of exquisite music," is one of Puccini's predominating traits as a composer.

## OPERAS

### *La Bohème*

In four acts, book by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, introduced at the Teatro Regio in Turin on February 1, 1896.

While Puccini was in Paris to attend the French première of his opera *Manon Lescaut*, he began to work on an opera about Bohemian life in Montmartre as described by Henri Murger in his famous novel *Scènes de la vie de Bohème*. The opera was completed at Puccini's villa at Torre del Lago, and in 1896 it was introduced in Turin under the direction of Arturo Toscanini.

The opera was phenomenally successful. With this one work, Puccini surpassed all of his previous efforts, producing a work which placed him unquestionably at the head of all Italian operatic composers of the time. Other Italian operas of the period may have been more original, may have aspired to deeper and profounder expressions; but none could surpass *La Bohème* for charm and loveliness and poignancy.

"In the score," wrote W. J. Henderson, "we find ourselves on familiar ground. There is an abundance of melody, and there are many twistings of rhythm and harmonic disjointings. . . . The melody of Puccini is fluent and at times he sings the note of human passion. . . . The best of the music in *La Bohème* is to be found in the first and last acts. There the composer has opportunities to write flowing love music, and his melodious measures fit the sentiment of the scenes."



Analyzing the greatness of the last act, Vittorio Gui wrote that it "is at once simple and profound, and the emotion it arouses is legitimate and genuine. The dramatic truth of this scene is all the more compelling because it lies not in a succession of forceful and contrasting episodes but in the pathos inspired by the most elevated and intense of human emotions: that sorrow which is at the root of all life; the certainty of not being able to react against the fatal approach of adverse destiny; a tragic resignation to the inevitable."

The instant success of *La Bohème* was by no means ephemeral. The opera has retained its popularity with audiences ever since, and has become a standard work in the repertory.

Four Bohemians—a painter, a philosopher, a musician, and a poet—live in a studio in Paris. Three of them leave the room, but the poet, Rudolph, remains to complete some work. While he is writing, a knock is heard at his door. It is Mimi, a seamstress who lives in the same house. They introduce themselves to each other, and a love-affair is awakened. Rudolph takes Mimi to the Café Momus for a gay evening with his Bohemian friends. Subsequently, Rudolph and Mimi are separated through the poet's jealousy. She becomes ill and broken. Brought to Rudolph's studio, the two are reconciled, and they swear never again to part. Mimi dies in Rudolph's room.

The tenor aria "*Che gelida manina*" and the soprano aria "*Si mi chiamano Mimi*" (which follow in succession) are perhaps the two most famous melodies in the opera. Also well-known are Musetta's waltz (Act II) and Mimi's death, "*Oh! Dio, Mimi*" (Act IV).

Recommended recording: VM-518-9 (La Scala Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra—Berrettoni).

### *Madama Butterfly*

In three acts, book by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, première at La Scala, Milan, on February 17, 1900.

Strange to say, the first performance of *Madama Butterfly* was a fiasco. The cause has never been completely understood. It is known that, beginning with the scene of Madama Butterfly's entrance in wedding attire—with its reminiscence of the music of *La Bohème*—the atmosphere in the opera house became tense. At the end of the first act, hissing was heard above the applause. As the opera progressed, the uproar of opposition grew until, by the end of the opera, the entire house was expressing its disapproval.

This failure compelled Puccini to withdraw the score of the opera from La Scala after one solitary performance. But he never lost faith in his work. "It is I who am right," he wrote to a friend. "It is the finest opera I've written." And some days later, he repeated his belief to still another friend: "You must have been dismayed at the vile remarks of an envious press. But never fear! *Madama Butterfly* is full of life and truth, and soon she will rise from the dead. I say it, and stick to it, with unwavering conviction."

It was, of course, Puccini who was right—not the first-night audience and critics. After a slight revision of the score, he presented it again on May 28, 1904, at Brescia. This time the audience was more receptive. In October 1905, the Henry W. Savage Opera Company performed the opera in English throughout the United States. Following its introduction at the Metropolitan Opera House on February 11, 1907 (with a cast including Caruso, Scotti, Louise Homer, and Farrar!) the work took its rightful place among the great operas of our time.

*Butterfly* is full of the most subtle and exotic suggestions—some of them arising from Puccini's use of actual Japanese folk songs and musical idioms, which he studied on phonograph records, others from a style which at times achieves Debussy-like refinements.

The opera is based on the play by David Belasco and John Luther Long which, in turn, was derived from Long's story *Madame Butterfly*. The action takes place in Japan, where the American officer Pinkerton takes the Japanese girl Cio-Cio-San as his "port wife." Pinkerton departs on his duties, while Cio-Cio-San gives birth to their child. When Pinkerton's ship returns, he is found with his legal wife, an American. When Cio-Cio-San discovers this, she gives over her child to Pinkerton, and then commits suicide.

The soprano aria "Un bel di vedremo" (Act II) is one of the most famous arias in modern opera, if not in all opera. Other memorable passages in this work include *Butterfly's* entrance and the "Flower Duet" from Act I, and the duet for tenor and baritone from Act II, "*Addio, fiorito asil.*"

Recommended recording: VM-700 (Royal Opera of Rome Soloists, Chorus, Orchestra—De Fabritiis).

### *Manon Lescaut*

In four acts, book by Domenico Oliva, Marco Praga, Giuseppe Giacosa, Luigi Illica, and Giulio Ricordi, introduced at Teatro Regio in Turin on February 1, 1893.

*Manon Lescaut* was Puccini's third opera, but it was the first one which was to survive, and the one which was first to bring him to the notice of the musical world. It is, of course, based upon the well-known novel of the Abbé Prevost, *L'Histoire de Manon Lescaut*, which also inspired Massenet to compose his own famous opera. The plot of the opera will be found in the discussion of Massenet's masterpiece. Puccini, however, adhered more closely to the novel than Massenet by having Manon's death take place on a desert plain near New Orleans—whither she has been deported, to be followed by her lover Des Grieux—instead of on the road from Paris to Havre.

This opera, wrote D. C. Parker, "contains some of the most vigorous and spontaneous melody which he has given us. . . . The 'Puccini manner' . . . is not absent. Indeed, considering the chronological position of the opera, it is surprising that there is so much of the mature Puccini in it."

The most memorable moments in the opera are Des Grieux's Romance in Act I; the duet for soprano and baritone, "*In quelle trine morbide*," in Act II; and the Intermezzo, and the tenor aria, "*No! pazzo son! guardate*," from Act III.

Recommended recording: C-Opera Set 13 (La Scala Soloists, Chorus, Orchestra—Molajoli).

### *Tosca*

In three acts, book by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, introduced at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome, January 4, 1900.

Puccini composed *Tosca* in his beautiful Florentine villa at Torre del Lago which he had built with the profits from *La Bohème*. It took him three years to write this opera, which was the immediate successor to *La Bohème*, and with it he proved that its predecessor had been no mere happy accident. The first performance of *Tosca* was phenomenally successful.

It is Specht's opinion that in this opera Puccini expressed not people but emotions: love, jealousy, fear, terror, nobility of mind, brutality, etc. Such emotions are interpreted in music often suffused with a "tranquil warmth" or "flaming passion."

The libretto is based on the celebrated play by Victorien Sardou, and the action takes place in Rome at the dawn of the nineteenth century. Cavaradossi, a painter, and his mistress, Tosca, become involved in the escape of Angelotti, a political prisoner, whom they hide in Cavaradossi's villa near Rome. The chief of police, Scarpia, suspects Cavaradossi of complicity and arrests him. Meanwhile, Scarpia—who falls madly in love with Tosca—tries to extract from her the whereabouts of Angelotti, by placing her in a room next to the chamber where Cavaradossi is being tortured. Scarpia offers to free Cavaradossi if Tosca will give him her love; instead, she kills him. Cavaradossi is executed, and Tosca throws herself into the Tiber.

One of the most moving pages in the opera is the soprano aria "*Vissi d'arte*," which Tosca sings to the Virgin in Act II after Scarpia makes advances to her. The other well-known passages include the tenor aria "*Recondita armonia*," the duet for soprano and tenor, and the "*Te Deum*" for baritone and chorus from Act I; the tenor aria, "*E lucevan le stelle*," and the duet for soprano and tenor, "*O dolci mani*," from Act III.

Recommended recording: VM-539, 540 (Royal Opera of Rome Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra—De Fabritiis).

# PURCELL

HENRY PURCELL, b. Westminster, in or about 1658. As a boy, he was admitted as a chorister into the Chapel Royal, and while there he composed his first anthems. When his voice broke in 1673, he was engaged as "keeper, maker, mender, repairer, and tuner" of the King's instruments. Through John Blow's influence he was appointed copyist at Westminster Abbey; then, when Blow resigned his post as organist at the Abbey, Purcell succeeded him. In 1682, he became organist of the Chapel Royal. He died in Westminster in 1695.

PURCELL is frequently spoken of as "the father of English music." He deserves his designation not only because his opera *Dido and Aeneas* is the first great opera in English music, but also because his *Fantasias* for strings, in various parts, composed in 1680, are among the most original and inventive instrumental works of the period; though seldom heard today, they remain fascinating examples of early instrumental music, bold and resourceful in their writing for strings (Recommended recording: CM-315; International String Quartet). He also composed admirably and adventurously for solo instruments, as, for example, in his *Golden Sonata* for two violins and harpsichord (Recommended recording: CM-315; Primrose, Menges), and in his suites for harpsichord.

"Purcell's genius," wrote Dr. Burney, "was equal to that of the greatest masters, and though his dramatic style and recitative were formed in a great measure on French models, there is a latent power and force in his expression of English words, whatever be the subject, that will make an unprejudiced native of this island *feel*, more than all the elegance, grace, and refinement of modern music, less happily applied, can do."

Perhaps the most significant of Purcell's gifts was his ability to write beautiful melodies. In Henri Dupré's estimation, few composers in all history possessed Purcell's melodic sense; Purcell sings, says Dupré, "as naturally as a bird."

## OPERA

### *Dido and Aeneas*

In three acts, libretto by Nahum Tate, first performed at the Josias Priest School for Girls in Chelsea (London) in or about 1690.

Around 1689, Purcell was commissioned by a boarding school for girls in Chelsea to write an opera. This opera proved to be not only his masterpiece, but also one of the historic landmarks in English music. It is, in Gustav Holst's description, "one of the most original expressions of genius in all opera."

Nahum Tate's libretto, based upon the love of Aeneas and Dido from Virgil's *Aeneid*, is a mediocre one, sometimes dramatic in action but more often of a discouragingly prosaic quality. Yet Purcell's genius gave this libretto wings, and through his music Tate's commonplace lyrics soared high.

Dido of Carthage is in love with Aeneas, and her love is returned. A sorcerer, an enemy of Dido, appears before Aeneas in the guise of Mercury and commands him to leave Carthage at once. Aeneas is tempted to disregard the order, but Dido convinces him that he must obey the gods. After he has left, Dido dies of a broken heart.

In *Dido and Aeneas*, Purcell followed the route set by Monteverdi in establishing the form for opera. There is here a remarkable fusion between music and text; there is here a wonderful integration of the ballet within the context of the play; there is here simplicity, directness, deep feeling; there is here, finally, tellingly dramatic writing—as in the musical descriptions of a storm, of the confusion and movement attending the departure of a ship from the harbor, of the mystery attending the actions of the Furies. No opera before Gluck had achieved such vivid pictorial writing, so majestic an expression of tragedy.

"In the variety of its style, in its power of crystallizing instantly a situation, a new scene, a character, it is dramatic music of the first order," wrote Hubert J. Foss. "In the last particular the special greatness of Purcell's achievement lies most. He has the power to vivify each of the characters, puppet-like though they appear to be in the libretto; he enlivens each scene, so that it seems as if paper flowers and property trees had blossomed into real fragrance and were oozing the real sap of spring. His gaiety is as lively as his sorrow is poignant; his crowds are as sharply characterized as his principals."

Dido's Lament, in the closing scene of the opera, is not only one of the greatest pages in the score, but one of the most moving and eloquent expressions of sorrow in all operatic music. Only a genius of the first order could have written music such as this, music whose effectiveness is heightened by its simplicity of treatment (the accompaniment, for example, is a simple ground-bass for 'cellos and basses).

An effective suite comprising some of the best arias and dances of the opera was created by Lucien Cailliet (Recommended recording: VM-647; Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy).

Recommended recording: Decca 25573-9 (Soloists, Kennedy Scott's A Cappella Singers, and Boyd Neel String Ensemble—Raybould).

# RABAUD

HENRI RABAUD, b. Paris, 1873. Was a pupil of Massenet at the Paris Conservatory, winning the Prix de Rome in 1894. He first attracted notice with *La Procession Nocturne*, performed in 1899. In 1918, he became conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Two years later, he was appointed director of the Paris Conservatory as successor to Fauré. He also became conductor of the Opéra-Comique.

RABAUD has the characteristic French traits of grace and refinement: the power of conveying subtle impressions and of writing music of exquisite sensibility. Of sound construction, with assurance of touch and of form, his music enchants audiences with its self-confidence, romanticism, and poetic aspirations. He has also, on occasion, an engaging sense of humor.

## OPERA

### *Marouf*

In five acts, book by Lucien Népoty, introduced at the Opéra-Comique in Paris, May 15, 1914.

*Marouf* is Rabaud's most important work, the one through which his important place in modern French music has been won. Franco Fano has spoken of "the charm of the music which comments so wittily on Népoty's fantastic poem; its Oriental color so adroitly toned down by the composer's refined and graceful art; the superb verve of its instrumentation."

It is based on one of the tales in *The Arabian Nights*. Marouf, tired of his wife, decides to run away to sea with a group of sailors. They are shipwrecked, and he is the only survivor. Recognized by an old friend, Ali, Marouf is brought to the town of Khaltan where he is introduced as the richest merchant in the world. The Sultan offers Marouf his daughter in marriage. For forty days Marouf lives in luxury, at the same time skillfully depleting the Sultan's treasury by his thefts. At last, he confides his true circumstances to his wife. They decide to run away. A peasant gives them shelter in the desert where, through a magic ring on the finger of Marouf's wife, the peasant is turned into a genie, and a cave into a storehouse of great wealth. The Sultan apprehends Marouf and his wife, but when he sees their great wealth he apologizes to Marouf for doubting him, and takes the pair back with him to the royal palace.

Rabaud's score is a curious blend of good and bad. It is at its worst in its pseudo-Orientalism; the music that accompanies the Oriental ballet in the third act is one of the poorer pages in the score. However, there are many compensating features, and it is these that convert the opera into pleasing entertainment. The libretto opens on a promising note of hilarity when Marouf, the cobbler, oppressed by a termagant wife, decides to escape. Unfortunately, his adventures never quite succeed in maintaining their brisk opening pace. Before long, the libretto becomes diffuse, long-winded, and dull. That the listener does not completely lose interest in the opera long

before the final curtain is a tribute to Rabaud's skill and experience as a composer. At its best, *Marouf* is shrewdly constructed, with the French gift of painting subtle tints in sound and producing elusive qualities in the orchestration. More than once it succeeds, with felicitousness, in capturing musically the mood on the stage.

Recommended recordings: "*Il est des Musulmanns*," C-D15035 (Thill); "*La Caverne*," C-D15305 (Thill).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *La Procession Nocturne*

This famous orchestral tone poem (Op. 6) was introduced by the Colonne Orchestra on January 15, 1899. It was inspired by a poem of Lenau. With tranquil music that proceeds from the first bar to the last with virtually uninterrupted placidity except for a brief climax, Lenau's description of Faust contemplating a religious procession on a summer night is retold in tones.

A summary of Lenau's poem is appended to the published score and provides the program: "From a lowering sky the heavy and somber clouds hang so close to the top of the forest that they seem to be looking into its very depths. . . . Faust is doomed to travel through its obscurity. His gloomy despair renders him insensible to the marvelous emotions which are called forth by the voices of Spring. . . . What is the peculiar light that illumines the forest in the distance, casting its glow upon both sky and foliage? . . . A solemn procession is passing near, and a multitude of children carrying torches, advance, two by two. It is the night of St. John's Eve. . . . From his leafy retreat, whence he sees the passing of the faithful, Faust bitterly envies them in their happiness. As the last echo of the song dies away in the distance . . . the forest again becomes alight with a magic glow that kisses the leaves. Faust, left alone among the shadows, seizes his faithful horse, and, hiding his face in its soft mane, sheds the most bitter and burning tears of his life."

Recommended recording: C-D15078-9 (Symphony Orchestra—Rabaud).

# RACHMANINOFF

SERGE RACHMANINOFF, b. Onega, Government of Novgorod, 1873. Studied at the Moscow Conservatory, where he won a gold medal for composition in 1892. By his twentieth year he had composed an opera (*Aleko*), the *Trio élégiaque*, and the world-famous C-sharp minor Prelude. By his twenty-fourth year, he was well-known throughout Russia as composer, conductor, and pianist. In 1909 he visited the United States for the first time, introducing himself in all three capacities. He subsequently made many tours of the country, firmly establishing himself as one of the greatest piano virtuosos of our time. In 1917, the Revolution in Russia converted him into an exile, and he made his home in Switzerland and the United States. He died in California in 1943.

IT cannot be said that Rachmaninoff's music ever opened new worlds. He was satisfied to recreate old ones, nostalgically and eloquently. His piano concertos, symphonies, the tone poem *Isle of the Dead*, his piano pieces, and songs are the expressions of a nature sensitively attuned to beauty. When his vein of melody was tapped, it gushed in a warm stream of that Russian lyricism which can turn the stone heart to water. No Russian composer since Tchaikovsky could be so moving as Rachmaninoff. With cerebral music he never had much sympathy; hence his early fierce antagonism to such Russian nationalists as Mussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov who had gospels to preach in their music. Rachmaninoff never sought to expound doctrines other than the doctrine of beauty. And that is why his music is always "singing." It might be said of him, as has sometimes been said of Tchaikovsky: He was the Russian soul in music—emotional, hypersensitive, moody, elegiac, at alternate moments brooding and savage.

He was an eclectic composer, combining within himself many different schools and styles. As Frederick H. Martens wrote: "Rachmaninoff might be called a connecting link between old traditions and new ideals. His technique is eclectic: he knew the modern German and French masters. His creative gifts, however, were his own—and he is Russian. He stood midway between futurism and impressionism, relying on his own great resources of imagination to create his fine individual works."

## CONCERTOS

### *Concerto No. 2 in C minor*

The failure of his First Symphony and First Piano Concerto brought on in Rachmaninoff a despair which became psychopathic. Gloom poisoned his spirit and made creative work impossible. Some of his friends, alarmed by this persistent morbidity, urged him to visit a Dr. Dahl, a sort of Dr. Coué, who was famous for healing mental cases through autosuggestion. Rachmaninoff visited him daily, lay on the table in a half-stupor, and heard the doctor chant to him: "You will begin to write your concerto, you will work easily, your concerto will be great music." The treatment, continued for several months,



worked miraculously. Rachmaninoff began composing again with new vitality and freshness; his melancholia was dissipated, and he took a new lease on life. Ideas came to him rapidly, and his pen seemed to fly in his hand as he wrote. The result was his Second Piano Concerto, Op. 18, in many respects the best loved of all his larger works, and one of the most inspired. Rachmaninoff dedicated the concerto to Dr. Dahl.

The year of its composition was 1900, and its first performance took place on October 14, 1901 with the Moscow Philharmonic, the composer playing the piano part. Few of Rachmaninoff's works are so richly filled with intoxicating melodic ideas; few seem to have arisen in such a soaring flight of inspiration. From the majestic opening of the first movement (*Moderato*) with its succession of chords pronounced by the solo piano in increasing sonority from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*, through the eloquent melody for oboes and violas in the third movement (one of the most stirring lyric pages in modern concerto literature), the concerto teems with exciting, moving, passionate, tender ideas, pouring forth inexhaustibly. The second movement, *Adagio Sostenuto*, is a particularly poetic page, somewhat sentimental, somewhat nostalgic, but always deeply felt and sensitively expressed.

Recommended recording: VM-666 (Moiseivitch; London Philharmonic—Goehr).

### *Concerto No. 3 in D minor*

Rachmaninoff composed his Third Concerto, Op. 30, expressly for his first tour of the United States in 1909. It was introduced by the New York Symphony Society under the direction of Walter Damrosch on November 28, 1909, the composer playing the solo piano part.

Written almost a decade after the Second Concerto, this work is radically different in spirit and style from its predecessor. It is less emotional and nostalgic, bolder and freer in its use of musical resources. Oskar von Rieseemann emphasizes this change in Rachmaninoff's writing: the enrichment of harmonic writing, the "broadening of his musical conscience," the "striving for strict thematic unity." "Its themes hold us by their intense expressive powers, and the mastery of its structure in general and in detail is unequalled."

It is more symphonic in breadth and proportion than the Second Concerto—so much so that even the cadenza has an instrumental background. It is in three movements: *Allegro*, *Intermezzo*, and *Finale: Allegro*. It is dedicated to Josef Hofmann.

Recommended recording: VM-710 (Rachmaninoff; Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *The Isle of the Dead*

In 1905, Rachmaninoff was appointed general manager and conductor of the Grand Theater in Moscow. He was now one of Moscow's most famous

musicians. Convinced that in winning popularity he was losing his soul, he eventually decided to give up his post, go into seclusion, and devote himself exclusively to composition. He therefore went to Dresden, where he lived a virtually monastic life, absorbed by his creative work. It was during this period (1907) in Dresden that he composed *The Isle of the Dead*, Op. 29.

Rachmaninoff's tone poem was inspired by Arnold Böcklin's painting of the same name. With the imagination of a true tone poet, Rachmaninoff not only conveys the somber mood of the painting, but also recaptures musically the powerful sentiments and moods it engenders. The grim pines, the dusky waters, the Stygian boatman, are portrayed in music marked first by controlled nervous excitement, then by a great melancholy, gradually developing into a threnody of enormous intensity, and ending finally in music of other-worldly calmness in which peace, at last, succeeds suffering.

Herbert Elwell gives the following description of the music: "Rachmaninoff begins his symphonic poem (*Lento*) with the somber colors of muted strings and harp in low registers. Horns, brass, bass clarinet, and contrabassoon are added as the 'cellos bring forward an undulating figure suggestive of the tranquil lapping of the water about the mysterious island. This figure is woven more or less continuously through the texture of the first portion of the Poem, the unfoldment of which discloses an important motive for the horn and various episodes leading with cumulative broadening of tone to a climax in which the brass comes forth with a theme resembling a *Dies Irae*. After this quickening of tempo there is a calmer section. . . . The music then proceeds with great urgency and animation towards the principal climax of the work, which culminates in a mighty volume of sound. . . . There is a reminiscence of a foregoing theme in the oboe, and with the appearance of the original 'cello motive the Poem comes to a tranquil conclusion."

Recommended recording: VM-75 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Rachmaninoff).

## PIANO MUSIC

If there is any music with which the name of Rachmaninoff is invariably associated, surely it is the two piano preludes in C-sharp minor (Op. 3, No. 2) and in G minor (Op. 23, No. 5). These pieces attest to the popularity of Rachmaninoff's smaller works and speak his success in writing in the more intimate forms. He was indeed extraordinarily successful in achieving artistic distinction and technical adroitness in his smaller piano works, some of these representing his highest flights of inspiration.

Rachmaninoff's most successful pieces for the piano include the six *Moments Musicaux* (Op. 16), the *Ten Preludes* (Op. 23), *Thirteen Preludes* (Op. 32), the six *Etudes Tableaux* (Op. 33), and the nine *Etudes Tableaux* (Op. 39).

Montagu-Nathan comments as follows on these smaller piano pieces: "He writes in a variety of moods and styles. At times he is meditative, as in the B major Prelude (Op. 32), on occasion almost feminine in delicacy, as in the

fifth prelude in the same set. . . . Examples are to be found in which there is a greater ruggedness than in Brahms, though falling short of the rather savage emotionalism of Medtner; sometimes he surpasses the lyricism of Schumann, and is as tuneful as Mendelssohn. Then there are instances, too, of a leaning towards pure classicism as in the third and eighth preludes (Op. 32). . . . But his individuality is best shown in the works in which occur those heroic moments which his popular Prelude had led us to expect. It is in pieces of this kind, in the last bars of the thirteenth Prelude (Op. 32), in the opening of the second and third piano concertos, that he seems to be writing for himself."

Recommended recording: "Eleven Piano Pieces," (including *Mélodie*, Op. 3, No. 3; *Humoresque*, Op. 10, No. 5; *Moment Musical*, Op. 16, No. 2; *Prelude*, Op. 23, No. 10; *Preludes* Nos. 3, 6, and 7 from Op. 32; *Etudes Tableaux*, Op. 33), VM-722 (Rachmaninoff); *Prelude in C-sharp minor*, Op. 3, No. 2, V-1326 (Rachmaninoff); *Prelude in G minor*, Op. 23, No. 5, V-7466 (Horowitz).

## SONGS

Most of Rachmaninoff's works abound in happy lyric ideas, and it is to be expected that he should have written felicitously in the song form. Montagu-Nathan has this to say about the songs: "Rachmaninoff appears to be content with a beauty of a more or less conventional kind, and his accompaniments rarely essay the high descriptive. Occasionally, one observes a novel touch, as in the concluding bars of *Christ is Risen* and *Sorrow in Springtime*. . . . Generally speaking, Rachmaninoff is at his best in songs where the piano part is of a light texture, as for instance in *Night is Mournful* and the very charming *Lilacs*, but he is also credited with examples in which a wealth of sound has contributed to the beauty of the song and at the same time to the descriptiveness of the whole. *Spring Waters* provides an instance of this: the climactic moment at the words 'Spring Is Here,' when the earlier arpeggio figure is repeated in heavy chords, successfully reproduces the sentiment of the text, which is altogether very happily translated into music. . . . On the whole, Rachmaninoff's songs exhibit no striking harmonic novelty and no startling formal innovations. He is no realist; his songs are always pleasing, nearly always dignified."

Recommended recordings: *Floods of Spring*, V-4548 (Dickson); *In the Silent Night*, C-17242D (Kullman); *Sorrow In Spring*, V-4548 (Dickson); *Vocalise*, arranged for orchestra by Rachmaninoff, V-7221 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Rachmaninoff); *Harvest of Sorrow*, V-118595 (Kipnis).

## SYMPHONY

### *Symphony No. 2 in E minor*

Rachmaninoff's best known symphony—his Second, Op. 27—was composed in 1907, and was first performed under the baton of the composer in St. Petersburg on February 8, 1908.

A comprehensive outline of the work was published many years ago in the Boston *Transcript*: "The symphony begins with an introduction (Largo): a stately phrase given to the 'cellos and basses is answered by somber chords for wood-winds and horns. . . . The main body of the movement, Allegro moderato, is reached. This portion of the movement is noticeable for its simple conformity to tradition. . . . The development . . . is on the whole unusually simple and direct. . . . The coda is rather long and elaborate but does not involve the use of new material.

"The second movement, Allegro molto, is a brilliant scherzo of far less conventional type. First and second violins, with oboes, begin an incisive accompaniment figure, while four solo horns give out a vigorous theme. The strings answer with a phrase. . . . There is a free modulation leading to a new section with a broad melody given out by the strings. There is an episode in canonic style. . . . The movement is conspicuous for its inimitable vivacity, striking use of orchestral resources, and intrinsic musical originality.

"The third movement, Adagio, is naturally of a lyric cast and at the same time conventional in its musical treatment. It opens with an expressive theme for the strings to which the clarinet answers with a melodic episode. Then comes an episode constructed on the 'violin figure' from the introduction of the first movement. . . . The opening theme of the Adagio returns followed by a clarinet solo. . . . The most salient characteristics of this movement are its melodic grace and straightforward simplicity of construction.

"The finale begins with a reference to the 'canonic episode' of the scherzo, leading directly to a brilliant and forceful theme. There is a cheerful subsidiary . . . leading to a repetition of the first theme. This in turn leads to a broad second theme given out by all the strings (except the double basses). . . . There is an episode from the Adagio, built up from the introductory phrase. The first theme returns with some skilful canonic workmanship. The 'cheerful' subsidiary returns, this time chiefly in the brass, leading to a repetition of the broader second theme. There is a brilliant ending in which the first and second themes appear in contrapuntal opposition."

Recommended recording: VM-1024 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

# RAMEAU

JEAN PHILIPPE RAMEAU, b. Dijon, 1683. He began his music studies in a Jesuit school, continuing them in Italy. For six years he played the organ in Clermont-Ferrand, then went to Paris where he was a pupil of Marchand. In 1722, he published the first of his remarkable theoretical studies on music. His growing eminence as a theorist brought him to the notice of M. de la Pouplinière, who became his patron. In 1733, Rameau composed his opera *Hippolyte et Aricie*, successfully performed at the Paris Opéra. This was followed four years later by another opera, even more successful, *Castor et Pollux*. But his operas aroused the hostility of some musicians (headed by Rousseau) who considered him too cerebral and preferred the light Italian style of Pergolesi. He died in Paris in 1764.

RAMEAU was one of the most important figures in the early history of opera. He was the forerunner of Gluck in developing the music drama. Generally recognized as being the first modern colorist, Rameau—because of the striking originality of his harmonies and his startling orchestral effects—drew opera away from the stereotyped traditions set by the Italian composers, and introduced into it an entirely new expressiveness. He brought to opera a sense of the dramatic, an understanding of orchestral writing, and a strength and originality which had a purifying effect on the stuffy opera-writing of the eighteenth century.

He was the object of great abuse. Even with his first opera, *Hippolyte et Aricie*, he encountered the hostility of the Lullists (followers of Lully) because he was introducing into French operatic writing a style that represented a sharp deflection from the well-loved Italian operas of Lully. With each succeeding opera—as his experiments grew bolder—the opposition of admirers of Italian opera grew more intense. This hostility reached its climax in a musical war now known as the “*guerre des bouffons*.” On August 1, a traveling company presented in Paris Pergolesi’s *La Serva Padrona*, whose tumultuous success inspired Rameau’s enemies to open war against the French master. An entire cult (including Grimm, Diderot, d’Alembert, and Rousseau) proclaimed Pergolesi’s art the only true one, and condemned Rameau for his cerebralism and aridity. The battle was long and bitter, and Rameau did not live to see the vindication of his art: Many years later, when the battle of Italian opera against music drama was once again fought in Paris, this time centered around Gluck, Rousseau abandoned the camp of the Italians to defend the Austrian master.

Yet there were those who recognized Rameau as a great composer. “This man will eclipse us all,” wrote Campra. And Voltaire said, “Rameau has made of music a new art.” And a contemporary musicologist (Karl Nef) has written: “Rameau is among the most original discoverers of all times. . . . In his own way [he] created a well-rounded work of art which combines and unifies poetry, action, solo chorus, and orchestra, an accomplishment that is to be reckoned among the greatest achievements in the field of musico-dramatic art.”

## OPERA

*Castor et Pollux*

In five acts, book by P. J. Bernard, introduced at the Paris Opéra on October 24, 1737.

This is Rameau's magnum opus in the field of opera. Here a most "vivid feeling pierces through in a thousand places." Here we have "plasticity of rhythm, a sense of orderly life, delicacy, and care to maintain the balance of expression." In the dramatic strength of its music, the opera was years ahead of its time. Yet it must be confessed that in other respects it remained enslaved to tradition: in its pageantry, in its glorification of the ballet and ornate theatrical display. Though touched with moments of magic, at other moments it is stilted and untrue to life.

Castor and Pollux are twin brothers, both in love with Thélaière. Castor is killed in a combat, and Thélaière—mourning the loss of her lover—begs Pollux to intercede with Jupiter to bring Castor back to life. Even though Pollux loves Thélaière, he is willing to make the sacrifice. He prays to Jupiter and is told by the god that Castor can be restored to the living but only on condition that Pollux renounce immortality and Thélaière and assume Pollux's place in the underworld. Pollux consents, and in the Underworld he finds Castor, who refuses to accept the sacrifice. Castor consents, however, to return to earth for one day. There, in spite of Thélaière's pleas, he insists upon returning to the lower world. Jupiter, however, touched by this demonstration of brotherly love, restores Pollux to life and endows both brothers with immortality.

*Castor et Pollux* was so successful when first introduced in Paris that, between 1737 and 1785, it was given 254 performances. In recent years (until 1939) it was frequently revived by the Paris Opéra.

Recommended recording: "*Tristes apprêts*," C-214M (Laval).

## PIANO MUSIC

*Pièces de clavecin*

In the early history of keyboard music the name of Rameau is prominent. He was, with Couperin, among the early masters of piano literature. He published his first set of harpsichord pieces in 1705, but it was not until his second volume (1724) that he produced his masterpieces in this genre. "The harmony is simple, clear, with an occasional tasteful allusion to dissonance," wrote Louis Laloy. "He knows how to say a great deal with only a few notes. Throughout his tonality is firm, with as much force as delicacy. One can hardly imagine a language more apt or choicer than that found in this volume." Besides this, he could evoke many varied moods with equal success: languor in *Tendres plaintes*, of animation in *Feux-Follets* and *La Joyeuse*, of the graceful move-

ment of the dance in *Tambourin* (which is very famous), *Rigaudon*, and *Musette*. He could be lyric and dramatic at turns, pictorially descriptive, on occasion impressionistic, and charmingly witty.

Recommended recordings: *La Joyeuse*, *La Poule*, *Les Sauvages*, *Les Tricotets*, V-15179 (Landowska); *Le Rappel des oiseaux*, Musicraft 1090 (Kirkpatrick); Suite in E minor, VM-593 (Landowska).

## RAVEL

MAURICE RAVEL, b. Ciboure, France, 1875. Was a pupil of Fauré at the Paris Conservatory. In 1901 he won the Second Prix de Rome, and one year later his first important works for piano (*Jeux d'eau* and *Pavane pour une Infante défunte*) were performed by Ricardo Viñes. Ravel soon developed into one of France's greatest composers with several orchestral works, the ballet *Daphnis et Chloe*, and the opera *L'Heure espagnole*. He died in Montfort-l'Amaury in 1937.

MOST of Ravel's work falls into two categories. The first is his witty music—sharp, incisive with subtle Gallic wit—of which the piano concertos and *L'Heure espagnole* are the most representative. The other—the bulk of his works—is music for the dance. But whether he was writing witty music or dance music (or other non-classifiable works like his Quartet, songs, and most of his piano pieces) he composed with a remarkable lucidity of form, clarity of structure, and refinement of style. His sense of form was almost that of a classicist. As Tristan Klingsor wrote: "He was classical in his desire for order in all things, in the placing of his periods, in the melodic design, in harmony, in instrumentation. When he innovated—and certainly as a harmonist he did this frequently—it was in drawing unexpected but logical consequences from old principles."

He was the master of his tools; hardly another composer of our time so thoroughly dominated his means of expression, and made them so pliant to his purpose. But Ravel never regarded his technique as anything but a tool. What concerned him, first and always, was the work of art he was building. He consecrated himself to his artistic pronouncements with an almost religious devotion—writing only the music that came from him honestly and in what he considered his best vein. To his fingertips he was the artist. When he was inspired, therefore, he was one of the great composers of our generation; though even in his lesser works we find that same integrity, that same elegant workmanship.

## BALLET

*Daphnis et Chloe*

In one act and three scenes, book by Michel Fokine, introduced at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris on June 8, 1912.

Diaghilev, who had an unerring flair for genius, recognized signs of it in the Quartet in F major and the *Rapsodie espagnole*, and in 1910 commissioned Ravel to compose music for a ballet destined for Diaghilev's stars, Nijinsky and Karsavina.

"I remember," wrote Walter Nouvel, "that the composer lived near Fontainebleau in a small cottage. The floods were very heavy that year and, as we sat down to listen to what was ready of *Daphnis*, I noticed that the floorboards were curved by the waters pushing up underneath." By 1912 Ravel had completed the music.

At first Diaghilev was disappointed in it. "In the spring of 1912," wrote the publisher Durand, "with everything ready to put the work into rehearsal at the Châtelet . . . Diaghilev told me that the work did not afford him complete satisfaction, and that he hesitated to go on with the project. I employed my dialectic ability to restore his former enthusiasm. . . . Finally, after having reflected considerably, Diaghilev said simply: 'I will present *Daphnis*.'"

There were, however, delays before the ballet was ultimately performed. Controversy over the choreography led to disagreement between Diaghilev and Fokine—a disagreement which, at the end of the season, alienated the two. And other obstacles appeared, too, that threatened the project. However, on June 8, *Daphnis et Chloe* was finally presented—in a magnificent performance with Nijinsky as Daphnis, Karsavina as Chloe, and Adolf Bolm as Dorcon. Pierre Monteux conducted.

The action is derived from a fable by Longus. Daphnis lies asleep and dreaming before the grotto of Pan and his attendant nymphs. Maidens and shepherds enter, seeking Daphnis and Chloe. They find Daphnis and awaken him. In anguish, he looks for Chloe. She appears at last, encircled by shepherdesses. The two rush into each other's arms. Daphnis observes Chloe's crown. His dream was a prophetic vision: the intervention of Pan is manifest. The old shepherd Lammon explains that Pan has saved Chloe in remembrance of the nymph Syrinx, whom the god loved.

Now Daphnis and Chloe mime the story of Pan and Syrinx. Chloe impersonates the young nymph wandering over the meadow. Daphnis as Pan appears and declares his love for her. The nymph repulses him; the god becomes more insistent. She disappears among the reeds. In desperation, he plucks some stalks, fashions a flute, and on it he plays a melancholy tune. Chloe comes out and imitates the accents of the flute by her dance. The dance grows more and more animated. In mad whirlings, Chloe falls into the arms of Daphnis. Before the altar of the nymphs he swears on two sheep his fidelity. Young girls enter; they are dressed as Bacchantes and shake their tambourines. Daphnis and Chloe embrace



tenderly. A group of young men come on the stage. Joyous tumult. A general dance.

*Daphnis et Chloe* is familiar to most music lovers through the two orchestral suites drawn from the best musical episodes of the ballet. The first suite consists of Nocturne, Interlude, and *Danse guerrière*; while the second—the more famous—comprises Daybreak, Pantomime, and *Danse générale*.

Recommended recordings: "Nocturne" and "*Danse guerrière*" from Suite No. 1, V-11882 (Paris Conservatory—Coppola); Suite No. 2, VSP-2 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

## CONCERTOS

### *Concerto for Left Hand*

#### *Concerto in G*

Ravel's last two major works were his concertos for the piano—one of them exclusively for the left hand; the other for both hands. He planned the two-hand concerto for his own use during a projected tour of the United States, and the Concerto for the Left Hand was commissioned by the one-armed pianist Paul Wittgenstein. Both plans, however, were subjected to revision. Ill-health made Ravel abandon his American tour, and his two-hand concerto was introduced by Marguerite Long at the Salle Pleyel on January 14, 1932. And the one-hand concerto was introduced in Paris not by Wittgenstein, but by Ravel's pupil Henri Février, who had been coached in the work by the composer.

Ravel worked on the two compositions simultaneously. "It was an interesting experiment," wrote Ravel, "to conceive and to realize simultaneously the two Concertos. The first (for two hands), in which I shall figure as executant, is a concerto in the most exact sense of the term, and is written in the spirit of Mozart and Saint-Saëns. I believe that the music of a concerto can be gay and brilliant, and that it need not pretend to depths nor aim at dramatic effects. . . . At the beginning I thought of naming the work a *Divertissement*; but I reflected that this was not necessary, the title 'Concerto' explaining the character of the music sufficiently. From a certain viewpoint my Concerto has some resemblances to my Violin Sonata. It includes some elements borrowed from jazz; but only in moderation.

"The Concerto for the left hand is of a rather different character and in one movement only, with many jazz effects, and the writing is not simple. In a work of this kind it is essential to create the effect not of light, delicate texture, but of a score written for both hands."

Discussing these two works, Madeleine Goss wrote: "The Concerto in G [for two hands] is more typical of Ravel than the one for left hand alone. . . . He did not wish to make a dramatic or formal affair of this number. On the contrary, he wished it to be . . . gay, sparkling, and ironical, but most of all amusing. The middle part, however, is more than these; this movement

is filled with grace, tenderness, and simple melody in striking contrast to the restlessness of the outside movements. . . . The Concerto in G begins with a bright and elegant theme for piccolo. Throughout the work the orchestra is spirited and translucent, and the showering trills and arpeggios of piano and harp recall passages in *Ondine* and *Jeux d'eau*. The presto finale, with its ironical sallies into jazz, is a mad race between piano and orchestra. . . . In none of his compositions is Ravel more completely master of his art than in this concerto. It has been said to embrace all the essentials of his music: brilliance, clarity, elegance, originality; tenderness and simplicity in the middle part, and, in the last movement, daring vigor and brittle perfection.

"The left-hand Concerto is a complete contrast to this. . . . It is hard to believe that one hand alone can create such a full and rich effect—almost, in places, like a whole orchestra by itself. It is written all in one movement, beginning with a muffled introduction of basses and cellos (*brouillard sonore*) to which the other instruments of the orchestra add a crescendo of anguished and fierce intensity; the principal theme is a lugubrious and morose *Sarabande*. The piano begins with fortissimo chords and maintains, throughout the Concerto, a harsh, savage rhythm."

Recommended recordings: Concerto in G, CM-176 (Long; Symphony Orchestra—Ravel); Concerto for the Left Hand, VM-629 (Cortot; Paris Conservatory Orchestra—Münch).

## OPERA

### *L'Heure espagnole*

In one act, book by Franc-Nohain, introduced at the Opéra-Comique in Paris, May 19, 1911.

*L'Heure espagnole* is Ravel's outstanding humorous work. A mischievous book is here wedded to an equally impudent musical score. All of the different shades of humor, ranging from broad burlesque and clowning to sophisticated wit, all the naïveté and impertinence of the comedy are reproduced in this delicately tinted music. In some respects, it has an almost Mozartean character—not only in the deftness of the humor, but also in the refinement of the writing and the perfection of the form.

Concepcion, wife of the clockmaker Torquemada, is a coquette who has a string of lovers. When three of these come in, one after another, to pay court to her, she hides them in the large clocks in her husband's shop. Torquemada returns from his task of regulating the town clock, finds the lovers in their clocks, and compels each to buy the clock he has been hiding in. Then the lovers join with Torquemada and Concepcion in singing a quintet—a final touch of irony.

"Ravel has here found," wrote Jean-Aubry, "a subject that gives full rein to his sense of the comic and of amusing and refined exaggeration. In this work are . . . extended the vocal methods that made the fortune and the merited

success of *Histoires naturelles*. . . . What transpires above all from *L'Heure espagnole*, besides the vivacious personality of the composer, is the delicacy and tact with which he contrived to avoid the insipid flavor of the operetta and the heavy humor of the opera bouffe."

Recommended recording: C—Opera set 14 (Soloists and Orchestra—Truc).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

(For the orchestral suites, *Daphnis et Chloe*, see above: Ballet; for *Alborada del gracioso*, *Pavane pour une Infante défunte*, and *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, see below: Piano Music).

### *Bolero*

No single work of Ravel—probably no single serious work of our time—achieved such instantaneous and worldwide success as *Bolero*. Built upon a single motive, with its countersubject, which is repeated from the beginning of the work to the end, without variations, the only changes being in the instrumentation and in the growing sonority, it has an exciting kinesthetic appeal that sweeps audiences off their feet. It was commissioned in 1928 by the famous Parisian dancer, Ida Rubinstein, who danced to it in Paris on November 22 of that year. It was a sensation. When Toscanini introduced it to New York on November 14, 1929, there was cheering. Particularly in America did the work become a fashion and a fad. It was performed endlessly in movie houses, concert halls, on the radio. Six different recordings of the work appeared almost simultaneously. It was arranged for jazz band, for two pianos, for various combinations of solo instruments. It was brought into a popular musical revue on Broadway, and its title was bought by Hollywood for a motion picture.

In hands less cunning than Ravel's the work might have been banal and meretricious. As it is—because of Ravel's consummate command of instrumentation—it is dramatically effective, even if it is one of his lesser inspirations.

Recommended recording: VM-352 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

### *Ma Mère L'Oye*

The delicacy of Ravel's writing and his ability to write music so beautifully wrought and so fresh that at first hearing it seems simple and direct are nowhere better demonstrated than in his exquisite suite, *Ma Mère L'Oye* (Mother Goose). This suite was originally composed (1918) as a four-hand duet for the two children to whom the work is dedicated (Mimie and Jean Godebski). In this form it was publicly introduced at the Salle Gaveau in Paris on April 20, 1910 by two child pianists. Subsequently, Ravel orchestrated the work, and it is in the orchestrated version that it is best known today.

The work is in five sections—five children's pieces: I. Pavane of Sleeping Beauty; II. Hop o' my Thumb; III. Laideronnette, Empress of the Pagodas; IV. Conversations of Beauty and the Beast; V. The Fairy Garden.

"It would be hard to say," wrote Philip Hale, "which of the five movements is the most beautiful in fancy. The Pavane has a subtle, melancholy charm. 'Hop o' my Thumb' is curiously rhythmed and strangely effective by means of orchestration. 'Laideronnette' in the movement of a march is delightful, and with the movement that follows, in the time of a slow waltz and with a solo for the double bassoon representing the Beast, wins immediate popularity. 'The Fairy Garden,' . . . too, is most poetic."

Recommended recording: CM-151 C.B.S. Symphony—Barlow).

### *Rapsodie espagnole*

Ravel was born in the little Basque town of Ciboure only a short distance from the Spanish border. Spanish culture was Ravel's spiritual wet-nurse; he was frequently lulled to sleep to Spanish songs. Spain never lost its fascination for him, and some of his finest works are in Spanish idiom, the most famous being *Rapsodie espagnole*.

Commenting on Ravel's Spanish music, André Saurès wrote: "He has something of Goya and the picaresque. . . . Let no one think it was by chance that he made his entrance into music by way of Spain. . . . I recognize Spain in every part of Ravel—in what he was and what he did. This little man was so dry, so sensitive, at once frail and resistant, caressing and inflexible, supple as tempered steel; these traits are reminiscent of Spain. And his art, still more decidedly, is the French tongue touched with a Spanish accent."

*Rapsodie espagnole* was introduced by the Colonne Orchestra on March 15, 1908. Though in its sharpness and strong-muscled masculinity it was a far cry from Debussy, certain critics found it reminiscent of *Iberia* and condemned the similarity. However, to most French music lovers the Rhapsody proved appealing, and the work helped to further consolidate Ravel's position in French music.

The *Rapsodie* is in four sections: I. "*Prélude à la Nuit*"; II. "*Malagueña*"; III. "*Habanera*"; IV. "*Feria*."

Recommended recording: V-8282-3 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

### *La Valse*

If there is an undercurrent of tragedy in this apotheosis of the waltz, we must recall that it was composed at a time when Ravel was broken in spirit. The World War had shattered him; the suffering had literally turned the color of his hair to gray. Moreover, he had lost the one woman in the world to whom he was ever greatly attached—his mother. It was inevitable that something of this sorrow should penetrate into the music he was then composing.

Yet it is possible to find a subtler and deeper implication in the tragedy pervading *La Valse*. Ravel had always loved the Viennese waltz, and he was particularly fond of Johann Strauss. Now, in 1919, he realized that the traditional frothy music of Vienna sounded a rather false note in that city of sorrow and suffering. Thus, in composing this ballet, he was impelled to include not only the pre-war gaiety of Vienna, but also its post-war despair.

The music opens with the depiction of a Vienna ballroom of 1855. "Drifting clouds give glimpses, through rifts, of couples waltzing," runs the inscription at the head of the score. "The clouds gradually scatter, and an immense hall can be seen filled with a whirling crowd. The scene gradually becomes illuminated. The light of chandeliers bursts forth." Then, from the heart of the orchestra, rises a phrase, then a line, then, at last, the complete melody of a true pre-war Viennese waltz. It swells, expands, grows in intensity, lifting the world off its feet in a light-footed dance. But this is only the prelude to tragedy. A series of strident chords brings the joyous whirligig to an end. If the waltz reëmerges with abandon, it is a different kind of abandon—not that of joy, but that of despair. The discords become more and more intense; the atmosphere more and more gray. The waltz of Johann Strauss appears grim and incongruous in the tragic setting of post-war Vienna.

Strange to say, Diaghilev did not like *La Valse*. Though he had commissioned it, he would not produce it. He thought the score undistinguished, and felt that as a ballet it "lacked scenic action." Diaghilev's harsh opinion created a permanent rupture between composer and ballet impresario, bringing to an end a collaboration which, ten years earlier, had produced *Daphnis et Chloe*. In 1925, Ravel and Diaghilev met in Monte Carlo, at which time the impresario tried unsuccessfully to effect a reconciliation.

In the concert hall the popularity of *La Valse* was immediate. It was received warmly at its first performance on December 12, 1920 by the Lamoureux Orchestra in Paris, and has since then increased in appeal until now it is one of Ravel's most famous works. Ida Rubinstein eventually added it to her repertoire and scored a substantial success with it.

Recommended recording: VM-820 (San Francisco Symphony—Monteux).

## PIANO MUSIC

Ravel wrote brilliantly for the piano, evoking from the keyboard exquisite sounds and tone colors, and bringing to it a poetic imagination and a remarkable capacity for descriptive writing. In his piano music, as Henri Gil-Marchex said, "the writing is always admirably clear, every sign having its exact importance. . . . The magical formulas are all prepared, with a precision almost hairsplitting; all that is necessary is to read the text with scrupulous care, and no mistake can be made in the pianistic interpretation. On the other hand, the poetic interpretation is most subtle, and the effort of imagination required to translate Ravel's thought is far beyond the ability of ordinary

players. . . . It is music to be played with the heart, but also with clear intelligence."

### *Gaspard de la Nuit*

Composed in 1908, *Gaspard de la Nuit* was inspired by the poems of Aloysius Bertrand. It includes three numbers: I. *Ondine* (the most famous of the three); II. *Le Gibet*; III. *Scarbo*. The suite, in Roland-Manuel's opinion, "sums up all the virtues of Ravel's music, and the strength of his genius. . . . [It is] heavy with the enchantment of nocturnal visions." Alfred Cortot considers this work the very peak of Ravel's writing for the piano. "These three poems enrich the piano repertoire of our epoch with one of the most extraordinary examples of instrumental ingenuity which the industry of composers has ever produced."

*Ondine* is a description of the sound made by water; *Le Gibet* gives a picture of a gallows, while in the distance the sound of bells is heard tolling; *Scarbo* is the ironic portrait of a grimacing will-o'-the-wisp.

Recommended recording: CM-X141 (Gieseking).

### *Jeux d'eau*

This brilliant tonal description of rippling waters and splashing waterfalls results in music of such dazzling effect and brilliance that there are those who consider that it laid the foundation "for a new technique of the piano." Ravel composed it in 1901, when he was only twenty-six—and it was his first significant piece of music. "This piece," wrote Ravel, "inspired by the sound of water and the music of fountains, cascades, and streams, is founded on two motifs, after the fashion of the first movement of the sonata, without, however, being subjected to the classical plan."

Recommended recording: V-7729 (Cortot).

### *Miroirs*

In 1905, Ravel wrote a set of impressionistic pieces for the piano entitled *Miroirs*. It comprises five numbers: I. *Noctuelles*, which Léon Vallas described as "an inextricable mass of curves drowned in a sonorous flood of audacious intervals which interrupt the fluttering of nocturnal butterflies"; II. *Oiseaux tristes*—in Ravel's own opinion the "most typical" of the set, describing birds lost in a forest during the heat of summer; III. *Une Barque sur l'océan*—one of Ravel's most exquisite pages of tone painting, rich in its use of colors, subtle in its depiction of changing landscape on the sea; IV. *Alborada del gracioso*, the most famous of this group—brilliant and vivid in its use of Spanish rhythms and colors; V. *La Vallée des cloches*, which is in the vein of *Une Barque*.

The great popularity of *Alborada del gracioso*, both in its original piano version and in its later orchestral form, demands a more detailed comment.

*Alborada* means a "morning serenade," while *gracioso* implies (in the words of Jean-Aubry) "a kind of buffoon full of finesse, with mind always alert, and with irony ever in readiness—a sort of Figaro." Thus the work combines a delicate and slightly ironic mood with subtle tone painting. A characteristic Spanish rhythm is used throughout the entire work, exploited with great variety and virtuosity.

Recommended recordings: *Alborada del gracioso*, piano version, C-17137D (Gieseking); orchestral version, V-8552 (Minneapolis Orchestra—Ormandy).

### *Pavane pour une Infante défunte*

This tender elegy by Ravel has frequently been mistranslated as "Pavane for a Dead Child." It is, of course, nothing of the kind. It is a Pavane for a dead *Infanta*, the word denoting a princess of the royal house in old Spain. The Pavane is a slow and stately dance traditional in Spain, and Ravel utilizes the form for a delicate, majestic, and haunting elegy on the death of a princess. It was composed in 1899, and was introduced by Ricardo Viñes on April 5, 1902. Subsequently, Ravel orchestrated it.

Recommended recording: orchestral version, C-68066D (Symphony Orchestra—Branco).

### *Sonatine*

Though the Sonatine is a comparatively early work (1905) it is one of Ravel's greatest works for the piano. It is in classical Sonata form, and comprises three movements: the first slow, the second a minuet, the third brilliant.

"Here," wrote Guido Pannain, "he has attained to the ideal balance between the form which hampers him like a foregone conclusion, and his own individualistic melodic expression. In the actual musical quality of the Sonatine the same Ravel as elsewhere can be seen; but the true miracle of this miniature jewel lies in the perfection of the ensemble, that harmony between the parts and the whole which is at once the cross and the reward of all artistic creation."

Recommended recording: CM-X179 (Casadesus).

### *Le Tombeau de Couperin*

In this remarkable set of six piano pieces—begun in 1914 and completed in 1917—Ravel pays tribute to one of France's greatest musical spirits, Couperin. In it, Ravel aimed at recreating the atmosphere of Couperin's day in forms used by Couperin. With all its antique grace and delicacy, however, the work is intensely modern in its musical idiom. Edwin Evans wrote that it reminded him of "the days when such things were said with a shake of a lace handkerchief and a wave of porcelain snuffbox."

The suite is in six movements: Prelude, Fugue, Forlane, Rigaudon, Minuet, and Toccata. These musical forms—many of them old French dances—help

Ravel, in the words of Evans, to "reincarnate the very spirit of the precise and ordered classicism of the eighteenth century."

Completing it during the First World War, Ravel dedicated this music to the memory of his friends killed in the conflict. Somewhat later, he arranged four of the movements (omitting the Fugue and the Toccata) for small orchestra and in this form it was introduced by the Padeloupe Orchestra on February 28, 1920.

Recommended recording: orchestral version, V-12320-1 (Paris Conservatory—Coppola).

### *Valses nobles et sentimentales*

This set of seven brief waltzes, modeled after those by Franz Schubert, was composed in 1911 and was dedicated "to the delicious pleasure of useless occupation." Analyzing these waltzes, Madeleine Goss wrote: "The opening waltz is a startling combination of apparent discords; these at first shock the listener, but upon analysis are found to be entirely rational and legitimate. There are no introductory measures—the first waltz plunges at once into harsh chords in constant repetition. The second waltz is languid and voluptuous; the third lively, with quaint and unusual tone combinations. The five succeeding waltzes continue through an entire gamut of color and feeling. There is amazing variety in their measures—seduction, drama, and pathos are represented. The epilogue [which combines and elaborates the previous themes], full of lyrical beauty and ending in soft, sentimental tones, is especially appealing."

Recommended recording: CM-X194 (Casadesus).

## QUARTET

### *Quartet in F*

It was with the Quartet in F, performed in 1904 at a concert of the Société Nationale, that Ravel first achieved recognition as an important composer. As Vincent d'Indy wrote at the time, it placed Ravel "in the foremost rank of French musicians. . . . Ingenious and at the same time subtle . . . the Quartet is the ardent, the splendid effort of youth confident of its force."

"The Quartet," wrote Madeleine Goss, "has four movements, all of them filled with melodies of great lyrical beauty. In the first three movements these are woven together with delicacy and tenderness, while the last part contains passages of great vigor and passion."

Debussy thought highly of the Quartet. "In the name of the gods of music," he wrote to the composer, "do not touch one thing in the Quartet." On the other hand, Gabriel Fauré (to whom the work was dedicated) was highly critical, considering that the entire work did not fully realize its potentialities, and that the last movement was too brief and disconnected.

Recommended recording: CM-425 (Budapest String Quartet).



## SEPTET

*Introduction and Allegro*

This intimate work for string quartet, flute, clarinet, and harp—composed in 1906—is described by Slonimsky as “a concertino in essence and form.” The Introduction begins with a dialogue between flute and clarinet, and, after the entrance of the strings, a broad flowing melody for ’cello is heard. A pitch of excitement is reached, to pass as the Allegro is introduced by a harp solo, the principal theme of this movement. Subsequently a cadenza for harp recalls principal melodic subjects of both movements. The Allegro ends brilliantly and vigorously.

Recommended recording: CM-X167 (Stuyvesant Quartet; Newell; Wummer; McLane).

## VIOLIN MUSIC

*Tzigane*

Ravel composed his *Tzigane* in 1924. Originally, he wrote it for violin and an organ-like attachment for the piano called the luthéal. In this form it was introduced in London with Yelley d'Aranyi as soloist. Subsequently Ravel orchestrated the accompaniment, and it is as a work for solo violin and orchestra that this composition is famous today. It is a work calling for brilliant virtuosity and was intended by its composer as a parody of all Hungarian violin music. Herbert Antcliffe wrote of it: “He has gone right to the origin of all good music, to the traditional tunes and feelings of a people who care nothing for artifice nor convention.” Antcliffe further points to some of the salient qualities of this music, particularly its “freedom of handling, the lack of self-consciousness, the breadth of melodic thought, and the utter absence of the satiric grin which appears even in the most solemn and sentimental of its predecessors.”

Recommended recording: V-8411 (Heifetz).

# RESPIGHI

OTTORINO RESPIGHI, b. Bologna, 1879. Was a pupil of Federico Sarti and Martucci at the Liceo Musicale in Bologna; subsequently studied in St. Petersburg with Rimsky-Korsakov and in Berlin with Bruch. In 1913, he was appointed professor at the Liceo Reale di S. Cecilia in Rome. In 1923, by a unanimous vote of a commission created by the Italian government, he was appointed principal of the Liceo in succession to Bossi. He resigned this post in 1925 to devote himself to conducting and composing. He died in Rome in 1936.

OTTORINO RESPIGHI's greatest importance as a composer rests on his contribution towards helping to bring about a symphonic renaissance in Italy. His splendid orchestral music, brilliant in its instrumentation and utilizing fully the resources of modern harmonic and contrapuntal writing, was a powerful factor in reviving in Italy an interest in orchestral music. Respighi's style, in his best-known works, is marked by a classicism which, as G. A. Luciani wrote, "consists in a harmonious fusion of the latest musical tendencies. . . . To the success of his work, moreover, are added two traits which are eminently Latin: a feeling for construction, and a serenity whose expression is rare in the music of our times."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *The Fountains of Rome*

Respighi's first orchestral set of Italian pictures, *The Fountains of Rome*, was composed in 1916 and introduced on March 11, 1917, under Antonio Guarnieri, at the Augusteo in Rome. This suite is a set of impressionistic pictures in which the composer attempts to reproduce musically the sensations, emotions, and images which four famous fountains of Rome inspire in him at various times of the day. The work is in four sections.

I. The Fountains of Valle Giulia at Dawn. This is a beautiful and serene painting of a pastoral scene. Doubtless the composer is here made to think of the Roman countryside with its attractive landscapes and grazing animals.

II. The Triton Fountain in the Morning. Music of gaiety and ebullience, this movement suggests naiads and tritons running about, pursuing each other and indulging in an abandoned dance.

III. The Fountain of Trevi at Midday. This is rather solemn music depicting a procession in which Neptune's chariot, drawn by sea-horses, passes by, followed by a train of sirens and tritons.

IV. The Villa Medici Fountain at Sunset. This is the saddest and the most haunting movement of all. It describes dusk, with its gentle and peaceful melancholy. Bells are heard tolling, and the chirping of birds. All noises fade away into silence as dusk lapses into night.

In this work, Respighi has realized—in the words of Luciani—"a personal form of symphonic poem, where the descriptive and colorful element blends

intimately with the lyrical and sentimental element, and in a line which persistently maintains its classicism in spite of a very modern technique."

Recommended recording: VM-576 (New York Philharmonic—Barbirolli).

### *The Pines of Rome*

Eight years elapsed before Respighi wrote his second suite of Italian portraits: the famous *The Pines of Rome*. It was composed in 1924, and was introduced in Rome by Molinari on December 14, 1924.

The composer has appended a descriptive program to his published score which admirably describes the content of the music. The suite is in four movements.

I. Pines of the Villa Borghèse (Allegretto vivace). Children are playing in the pine grove of the Villa Borghèse, dancing the Italian equivalent of 'Ring-around-a-rosy.' They are mimicking marching soldiers and battles. Twittering and shrieking like swallows at evening, they soon disappear. The scene changes without interruption to the second movement.

II. The Pines Near a Catacomb (Lento). We see shadows of the pines which overhang the entrance to a catacomb. From the depths rises a chant which reëchoes solemnly, sonorously, like a hymn, and then is mysteriously silenced.

III. The Pines of the Janiculum (Lento). There is a thrill in the air. The full moon reveals the profile of the pines of Gianicolo Hill. A nightingale sings.

IV. The Pines of the Appian Way (Tempo di marcia). Misty dawn descends on the Appian Way. The tragic country is guarded by solitary pines. Indistinctly, incessantly, the rhythm of innumerable steps is heard. To the poet's imagination appears a vision of past glories; trumpets blare, and the army of the Consul advances brilliantly in the grandeur of a newly risen sun toward the sacred way, mounting in triumph the Capitoline Hill.

A novel feature of this work is the inclusion of a performing phonograph record into the instrumentation; in the third movement the nightingale's song is heard through a recording—the song being integrated into the texture of the score.

Recommended recording V-11917-8 (Paris Conservatory—Coppola).

# RIETI

VITTORIO RIETI, b. Alexandria, Egypt, 1898; brought to Italy while still a child. He studied with Frugatta in Milan, and in Rome with Respighi and Casella. It was through Casella's influence that Rieti was first brought to the attention of the music world. In 1925, his ballet *Barabau* was presented in London by the Diaghilev Ballet Russe. After 1925, he divided his time between Rome and Paris.

It has been said of Rieti that he is a "musical wag." His best vein is an ironic one: his works sparkle with humor, satire, sardonic malice. Commenting on this humorous bent in Rieti's music, Casella wrote: "In his hands popular or comic elements acquire significance and an amazing vivacity; the themes leap up and dance lightly in ordered play of counterpoint and counter-melody." Of Rieti's other traits, Casella wrote: "His compositions are characterized by extreme clarity; in a certain sense they may be said to be inspired by classic models, so limpid their quality and so clear the method of their construction."

## CONCERTO

### *Concerto for Quintet of Winds and Orchestra*

It was with this work that Rieti first attracted attention. He composed it in 1923, and on May 31, 1924, Alfredo Casella introduced it successfully at the International Festival of Contemporary Music in Prague. Into the framework of an eighteenth-century concerto grosso Rieti transplanted his satiric and acid style. His music, full of amusing sonorities and figurations, was interpreted by a Viennese critic as "a witty parody of operatic banality and diatonic simplicity." The Concerto is in three movements. In the Allegro, the principal theme is heard at the very beginning of the movement, given to a solo flute. The second movement, marked Grave, has an air of mock pathos. The Finale is full of spirit, and is the most ironic of the three movements.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *L'Arca di Noë*

The orchestral suite *L'Arca di Noë* (Noah's Ark), introduced at the International Festival of Contemporary Music in Prague on May 15, 1925, is one of Rieti's wittiest scores. It is marked, in the words of James G. Heller, by "a delightful naïveté . . . as though a child imagined the stilted modern figures of its painted ark stirring and disporting themselves."

The five movements of the suite are subtitled as follows: I. Prelude to the First Tableau (Allegretto sostenuto); II. The Flood (Allegro non troppo); II. Prelude to the Second Tableau (Allegretto comicamente grave);

III. March of the Animals (*Allegretto moderato un poco marziale*); V. The Rainbow (*Molto sostenuto e solenne*).

In reviewing this work, Olin Downes wrote: "There are amusing and ingenious effects, such as that of the piano which suggests in its tinkling upper register the constant dripping of rain, and the march of the animals as two by two they enter and leave the ark. All this is entertaining . . . with a certain self-conscious effort and fabrication when little fishes, very little fishes . . . are heard talking like whales."

## RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

NICHOLAS RIMSKY-KORSAKOV, b. Tikhvin, government of Novgorod, 1844. He was intended for a naval career and for six years was a student at the Naval College in St. Petersburg. At the same time he studied music privately. A meeting with Balakirev in 1861 aroused Rimsky-Korsakov's ambition to become a composer. He composed a symphony which Balakirev introduced in St. Petersburg in 1865. In 1871, Rimsky-Korsakov was appointed professor of composition at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, and two years after this he retired permanently from the Navy. For the next three decades, he was prominent as teacher, conductor, and composer. He died near St. Petersburg in 1908.

As a leader in the movement for nationalistic music, Rimsky-Korsakov has been acknowledged the dean of the school of Russian composers known as the "Five" (see Balakirev.) "He proved," wrote Montagu-Nathan, "that nationalism was not, as alleged, a mere cloak for technical ignorance, and in the course of time he gave the world a treasury of nationalistic musical art."

The four predominating traits of Rimsky-Korsakov's music have been uncovered by Platon Brounoff. "His melodies are of the old Russian style, entirely original in rhythm and character; his harmony is brilliant and daring, in which he uses the old Greek scales; he has an extraordinary talent for instrumentation—dazzling combinations of colors, strong, radiant, and brilliant, and at the same time transparent and clear; finally, qualities which you meet so seldom in the works of other Russian composers—namely, sunshine and warmth."

### OPERAS

Rimsky-Korsakov's operas represent to H. C. Colles the "turning away from the naturalism of the historic drama [Mussorgsky's *Boris*] to the symbolism of the pictorial stage, of which the ballet is the ideal representation. Vocal melody was not Rimsky-Korsakov's strong point as it was Tchaikovsky's. Rather the keen-edged instrumental phrase in appropriate coloring of violin,

trumpet or oboe, the counterpart of gesture, the incisive rhythm, and the languorous arabesque were the groundwork of his inspiration. . . . In the main . . . if we say that it was Rimsky-Korsakov who gave form and consistency to the Russian opera, we must also say that it was the Russian preoccupation with the ballet which imbued Rimsky-Korsakov with a distinctive sense of those qualities."

### *Le Coq d'or*

In three acts, book by Vladimir Bielsky, after Pushkin, introduced at Zimin's Private Theater in Moscow, on September 24, 1909.

Though Rimsky-Korsakov composed *Le Coq d'or*—his last opera—in 1907, it was not presented until after his death. The government authorities thought they saw in the tale a satire against the conduct of the Russian war against Japan and against Russian authorities and refused to permit its performance. The text was slightly altered and in this form the opera was presented up to the time of the Revolution.

The libretto is based on a poem by Pushkin. King Dodon, confused by the conflicting opinions of his councilors, seeks out an astrologer and his Golden Cock which has the gift of prophecy. The crowing of the Cock tells the King of danger. The King's sons go forth to fight the enemy and are killed. The King, too, goes forth to the battle. Near the scene of battle he meets the Queen of Shemaha, with whom he falls in love and whom he brings back to his own palace. When the astrologer demands payment for his Golden Cock, the King kills him. The Golden Cock avenges his master's death by slaying the King with his beak. Darkness falls. When the darkness is lifted, the Queen and the Golden Cock have disappeared.

Even this brief sketch of the opera's action highlights the strange and fascinating world Rimsky-Korsakov has created. It is a world in which the real and the ordinary are so intertwined as to suggest the wisdom of St. Augustine's insight: "It's true in a way because it's false in a way."

For this make-believe world he wrote music that is uniquely appropriate in spirit. The exquisite coloring of his instrumentation (in which field he was an unquestioned master) brilliantly realizes the promise of Bielsky's story and the composer's gorgeous melodic line, thus welding humor, beauty, absurdity, wistfulness and pathos into one organic whole. Surely there are few works in the whole realm of opera in which book and music are so happily wedded as in *Le Coq d'Or*. The composer's untimely death came before he could see a performance of his superb work. The Metropolitan has presented the opera successfully in English under the title *The Golden Cockerel*.

The famous "Hymn to the Sun" is heard in the second act, sung by Queen of Shemaha as she leaves her tent. The Bridal Procession in Act III is also frequently heard.

Recommended recording: orchestral suite, CX-254 (Minneapolis Symphony—Mitropoulos).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

*Capriccio Espagnol*

When the *Capriccio Espagnol* (Op. 34,) was introduced on November 12, 1887 in St. Petersburg under the baton of the composer, he wrote the following comment on this music: "The opinion formed by both critics and the public that the *Capriccio* is a 'magnificently orchestrated piece' is wrong. The *Capriccio* is a brilliant *composition for the orchestra*. The change of timbres, the felicitous choice of melodic designs and figuration patterns, exactly suiting each kind of instrument, brief virtuoso cadenzas for instruments solo, the rhythm of the percussion instruments, constitute here the very essence of the composition and not its garb or orchestration. The Spanish themes, of dance character, furnished me with rich material for putting in use multiform orchestral effects. All in all, the *Capriccio* is undoubtedly a pure external piece, but vividly brilliant for all that."

The *Capriccio* is in five sections: I. Alborada, morning song—a volcanic Spanish dance with a vivid splash of orchestral colors; II. Variations—these transform the theme (announced by the horns) into several different forms; III. Alborada, a recapitulation of the original dance-theme; IV. Scene and Gypsy Song, consisting of a series of cadenzas; V. Fandango of the Asturias, a Spanish dance-theme first announced by the trombones. The composition is brought to a close with a final repetition of the original Alborada theme.

Recommended recording: CM-X185 (Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of New York—Barbirolli).

*Russian Easter Overture*

Rimsky-Korsakov composed his *Russian Easter Overture*, Op. 36 (*La Grande Pâque Russe*) in 1888, and dedicated it to the memory of Mussorgsky and Borodin. He had borrowed his thematic material from the music of the Russian church, and to emphasize the religious character of the work he appended quotations from the Old and New Testaments to the published score.

"In the literary basis of the *Easter Overture* we get a glimpse of Rimsky-Korsakov's spiritual outlook and observe once more his inclination towards pantheism," wrote Montagu-Nathan. "In this work he sought to emphasize the contrast between the orthodox celebration of festivals and the pagan rites in which they originated. Even the bell music in which he reproduces the sounds he heard as a boy when he lived near the Tikhvin Monastery evokes from him an idea which would hardly commend itself to the conventionally devout; he prefers to regard it as a species of instrumental dance music, sanctioned by the orthodox Russian church."

Recommended recording: VM-937 (NBC Symphony—Stokowski).

*Scheherazade*

Without question this is Rimsky-Korsakov's most famous work, thus far maintaining unabated its popularity at symphony concerts. Built on material

from *The Arabian Nights*, it is Rimsky-Korsakov's most descriptive music, full of the colors of the Orient and touched with its subtle flavors.

"The program I was guided by in composing *Scheherazade*," wrote the composer, "consisted of separate, unconnected episodes and pictures from *The Arabian Nights*, scattered through all four movements of my suite; the sea and Sinbad's ship, the fantastic narrative of the Prince Kalendar, the Prince and the Princess, the Bagdad festival, and the ship dashing against the rock with the bronze rider on it. The unifying thread consisted of the brief introductions to Movements I, II, and IV, and the intermezzo in Movement III, written for violin solo and delineating Scheherazade herself as telling her wondrous tales to the stern Sultan. The conclusion of Movement IV serves the same artistic purpose. . . . These given motives thread and spread over all the movements of the suite, alternating and intertwining each with the other. Appearing as they do each time under different illumination, depicting each time different traits and expressing different moods, the self-same given motives and themes correspond each time to different images, actions, and pictures."

The two principal motives which assert and reassert themselves throughout the score are a loud orchestral motive heard at the very opening of the work—the voice of the Sultan, demanding a tale; and a theme for violin solo that stands for Scheherazade's voice as she begins the tale. The four movements are subtitled as follows: I. The Sea and Sinbad's Ship; II. The Tale of Kalendar Prince; III. The Young Prince and the Young Princess; IV. The Festival at Bagdad.

To the published score of his suite, Rimsky-Korsakov appended the following legend which sets the mood and the atmosphere for the music: "The Sultan Schahriar, convinced of the faithlessness of women, had sworn to put to death each of his wives after the first night. But the Sultana Scheherazade saved her life by diverting him with stories which she told him during a thousand and one nights. The Sultan, conquered by his curiosity, put off from day to day the execution of his wife, and at last renounced entirely his bloody vow. Many wonders were narrated to Schahriar by Scheherazade. For her stories she borrowed the verses of poets and the words of folk songs, and fitted together tales and adventures."

Recommended recording: VM-398 (Cleveland Orchestra—Rodzinski).

## SYMPHONY

### *Antar Symphony*

Rimsky-Korsakov's Second Symphony, Op. 9, was inspired by an old Oriental legend.

Antar saves a gazelle from a monster. The gazelle runs away. Wary, Antar rests on the grass and falls asleep. He suddenly finds himself in a palace, resounding with wondrous songs. It is the home of the beautiful Queen of Palmyra, the fairy Guel-Nazar (who is none other than the



gazelle Antar has saved). The fairy promises Antar the three greatest delights of the world. On his acceptance of her gift, the vision dissolves, and Antar awakens.

In the first movement of the symphony, Rimsky-Korsakov presents the story of the legend. In the next three movements he tonally describes the three great delights: the second movement is devoted to the rapture of revenge; the third, to the intoxication that comes with power (a triumphal march theme is used to symbolize the power of an Oriental potentate); and the fourth movement (built around an Arabian theme) describes the ecstasy of love.

The episodes which go to make up this unusual story are not difficult to recognize in the successive themes of the *Antar* Symphony and in its four movements. The *Antar* theme, first introduced in the opening *Largo* by violas, is clearly the most important and moves through all the phases of the tragedy, linking them together. The other outstanding theme of the first movement is that of the fairy, which is played by the flute against a background of soft horns. *Antar* predominates in the second movement also, but the fairy queen is absent. The third movement is characterized both by violent movement and an exquisite, sometimes humorous, charm. The *Antar* theme is frequently heard in powerful brass. It is also used to end the delicate, fairy-like fourth movement.

Although it does have four movements, and although the second is in form somewhat like the sonata, the *Antar* can hardly be called a symphony. And Rimsky-Korsakov has said as much himself.

Recommended recording: VM-210 (Paris Conservatory—Coppola).

## ROSSINI

GIOACCHINO ROSSINI, b. Pesaro, Italy, 1792. Studied with Mattei at the Liceo Musicale in Bologna. Soon after leaving the Liceo, he wrote a one-act opera. Success came to him in 1813 with the opera *Tancredi*, which circled half the globe within four years of its premiere. With *L'Italiana in Algeri* he became the composer of the hour in Italy. Subsequently he traveled to Vienna and London where he was received with adulation. From London he went to Paris, where, receiving an appointment as director of the Théâtre des Italiens, he settled permanently. For Paris he composed *William Tell* in 1829. Though he lived for almost forty years after the composition of *William Tell* he never again wrote an opera. He died in Passy, France, in 1868.

ROSSINI's greatest gift as a composer was his deft touch in writing sparkling, effervescent music that bubbles like champagne. Frequently criticized for writing music with little more depth than a mere surface veneer, Rossini nevertheless was a master of opera-buffa style. In the production of music that chuckles and sparkles in every bar, Rossini was incomparable.

## OPERAS

Of Rossini's contribution to opera, Streatfeild wrote as follows: "The invention of the cabaletta, or quick movement, following the cavatina, or slow movement, must be ascribed to him, an innovation which affected the form of opera, German and French, as well as Italian, throughout the century. Even more important was the change which he introduced in the manner of singing . . . florid music. Before his day, singers had been accustomed to introduce cadenzas of their own, to a great extent when they liked. Rossini insisted upon their singing nothing but what was set down for them." It might also be added that Rossini was the first to substitute the orchestra for the cembalo in accompanying the *secco recitativo*, and in his use of the orchestra he was persistent in his search for new colors and effects.

*The Barber of Seville*

In two acts, book by Cesare Sterbini, première at the Teatro di Torre Argentina in Rome on February 20, 1816.

In November, 1815, Rossini went to Rome where, upon a commission, he wrote his opera buffa masterpiece in fifteen days' time. Its first performance was a failure. For one thing, operagoers in Rome thought it presumptuous of Rossini to write a work on the same libretto used by their idol Paisiello. Besides this, accidents marred the production. During the performance of the opera, a cat walked across the stage; at another moment, one of the singers suffered a nose-bleed in the middle of an aria. When the principal tenor had trouble tuning his guitar on the stage, the audience went into an uproar.

At the second performance, however, the *Barber* fared better. Rossini provided a new cavatina for the principal tenor which caught the fancy of the audience, while the rest of the score made a deeper impression. At the end of the performance, the audience marched to Rossini's lodgings to give him an ovation.

Thus began the triumphant career of one of the most celebrated, indeed one of the greatest, opera buffas of all time. With this one masterpiece, Rossini took the Italian opera buffa out of the realm of absurdity into which it had sunken by his time, reducing to the ridiculous the "aggressive noisiness" and the "battering ensembles, finales, and the perpetual crash of trombones" found hitherto in the Italian comic opera. As Edward J. Dent remarked: "The *Barber* consciously and purposely exaggerates these devices partly to make fun of them and also to make the most of them."

*The Barber of Seville* is, of course, based on the famous comedy of Beaumarchais. Doctor Bartolo is in love with his ward, Rosina, who in turn loves Count Almaviva. Count Almaviva tries to gain access into the carefully guarded household of Doctor Bartolo first by feigning that he is a drunken soldier, then by impersonating the music teacher Don Basilio. He manages to get in touch with Rosina, and they plan an elopement.

At first their plans are frustrated when Doctor Bartolo convinces Rosina that her lover is unfaithful to her. But when Rosina learns that this is not so, she marries him instead of Bartolo. When the Count renounces Rosina's dowry in favor of Bartolo, the latter becomes more amenable to the marriage.

For this gay comedy, Rossini wrote music that is "bright and fresh and spontaneous from beginning to end," in the description of Frederick H. Cowen, "just as though the ideas flowed from the brain more quickly than his pen could write them down. . . . It is full of his most tuneful melodies; and all this, combined with the happy way in which he has caught the life and spirit throughout of Beaumarchais's comedy, makes it a work of genius, and a perfect example of what a comic opera should be."

It is interesting to point out that *The Barber of Seville* was the first opera to be sung in Italian in New York. This took place on November 29, 1825 at the Park Theater, during a season of opera conducted by the visiting Manuel Garcia company.

The famous passages of the opera include the Overture, the "*Largo al factotum*" aria for baritone, the soprano cavatina "*Una voce poco fa*," and the bass aria "*La Calunnia*."

Tradition has dictated that in the "Lesson Scene," the soprano singing Rosina may interpolate bravura arias by other composers, the favorite choices being Arditi's *Il Bacio*, Alabiev's *The Nightingale*, and *Home, Sweet Home*. The story goes that Rossini lost the music for this scene and, too lazy to write it again, decided to introduce selections by other composers.

Recommended recording: CM-Opera Set 8 (La Scala Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra—Molajoli).

### **William Tell**

In four acts, book by Etienne de Jouy and Hippolyte Bis, introduced at the Paris Opéra on August 3, 1829.

Hanslick once wrote that the change in musical style that took place with Rossini in *William Tell* was without precedent in musical history. Certainly, the wit of *The Barber of Seville* speaks here in more sober accents, and it is a deeper and more serious artist that we find in *Tell*. It is believed that a study of the sonatas of Beethoven was the force directly responsible for converting Rossini into a composer with a greater seriousness of purpose.

*William Tell* was written for Paris and introduced at the Opéra in 1829. Like *The Barber* it was not at first successful. Rossini's new style was disturbing; and the libretto was a handicap. A few discerning musicians, however, spoke in praise of it. Ortigue called it "sublime music." Bellini felt that the opera made all other contemporary works in that field (even his own) the creations of pygmies. Fétis insisted that Rossini had done the impossible in making a further advance on his previous masterpieces.

"The tunefulness and brilliance are here in abundance," wrote Frederick H. Cowen, "but they strike a deeper and more modern note. . . . There

is dignity, and a loftiness of expression, a picturesqueness and a feeling for the portrayal of true patriotism which are entirely different from and on a far higher level than anything else he ever wrote."

But it is Francis Toye's opinion that in this opera Rossini did not express himself so naturally, so sincerely, as he had done in his comic operas. "Rossini had nothing of the heroic in his nature, and a subject like that of *William Tell*, to come wholly to life, demands such a quality. Thus in trying to rise above himself he ceased to be wholly himself, with a consequent loss of vitality." However, Toye calls *William Tell* a "monument, a splendid monument to Rossini's musicianship."

The story of *William Tell*, based on the celebrated Schiller play, is familiar. The Swiss are rising in rebellion against their tyrannical governor, Gessler. To test the loyalty of his people, Gessler builds a pole in the town square, puts a hat on it, and orders everyone to salute it as a token of allegiance to him. William Tell refuses to do so. The governor then orders him to prove his accuracy in archery by shooting an apple off the head of his son. Tell does so successfully. As he is about to leave, another arrow falls from out his clothing. Upon questioning, Tell confesses to Gessler that the second arrow had been intended for the tyrant in the event that Tell accidentally killed his son. Gessler throws father and son in a prison infested with reptiles. Tell, however, escapes, the insurrection against Gessler is successful, and Tell himself kills the tyrant.

*William Tell* is one of the longest operas in the repertoire (requiring about six full hours for a complete performance), and for this reason it is always heard in a truncated version. The overture is one of the most famous in the entire realm of opera. Well-known, too, are the soprano aria, "*Selva opaca*," (Act II), the choral *Tirolese* and the ballet music (Act III), and the tenor aria, "*O muto asil del pianto*," (Act IV).

Recommended recordings: Overture, VM-605 (NBC Symphony—Toscanini); Ballet Music, V-26743-4 (Sadler's Wells Orchestra—Lambert); "*O muto asil del pianto*," C-LFX110 (Thill).

## ROUSSEL

ALBERT ROUSSEL, b. Turcoing, France, 1869. He became an ensign in the armored cruiser *Styx* bound for China. In 1894, he left the Navy to study music. After being a pupil at the Schola Cantorum he served as a professor of counterpoint there from 1902 to 1913. In 1911 he experienced his first success as a composer with *Evocations*. A series of excellent works brought him to the vanguard of modern French composers. He died in Royan in 1937.

ROUSSEL was one of the major French composers of the twentieth century. Analyzing his style in general, Roland-Manuel wrote: "Roussel is essentially original, belonging to no definite lineage or school. His originality is not deliberate, but is demonstrated by the fact that he uses no common-

places. He does not even profit by his experience, and has as little use for his own previously discovered processes as for those discovered by others. Hence the variety of his output, and the apparent *gaucherie* which, as Monsieur Jean Marnold points out, is in fact nothing but the avoidance of convenient tricks. . . . Among the distinctive features of his music, the writer notes the tendency to omit or to indicate sparsely the bass of his harmonies, the effect being at times subtle, at others forceful and dramatic. . . . His orchestration is not a science, but instinctive."

He was always seeking new ways of expressing himself, always changing his style and idiomatic habits, always groping for a new manner in his musical writing—so much so that frequently one work of his is sharply different from those just before and after it. Every Roussel composition, points out Joseph Barruzi, "represents a fresh start, a discovery of new horizons; it is a quest not so much of self-expression as of untried forces; some of these latent in him, and to be discovered by dint of arduous labor; others to be sought far afield by dint of long, subtly contrived approach."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Evocations*

In 1909, Roussel's insatiable *Wanderlust* drove him to Indo-China. It was this trip that inspired his first important work, *Evocations*, Op. 15, which Jean-Aubry calls "one of seven or eight symphonic works composed during twenty years which will insure, for a long time to come, the future of French music."

It is a choral symphony in three movements: I. *Les Dieux dans l'ombre des cavernes*; II. *La Villa rose*; III. *Aux Bordes du fleuve sacré*.

"It is fashioned with an art that is extremely complex," explains Paul Landormy. "At the outset, one must admire especially in the first section the beautiful orderliness of details, the skilfully studied development, the imposing disposition of themes, the tonalities and values. . . . His dreams are splendid in color and luxury. Incomparable is the variety of the sensations which he transmits here. There is an astounding profusion of them; they are dazzlingly fantastic."

### *Le Festin de l'araignée*

On April 13, 1913, there was presented at the Théâtre des Arts in Paris a ballet called *The Spider's Banquet*, whose text by Gilbert de Voisin had been inspired by Fabre's *Studies of Insect Life*. The music for the ballet was composed by Roussel. It scored a great success, and was soon incorporated into the repertory of the Opéra-Comique in Paris. A few months later, Roussel adapted some of the music from the ballet into an orchestral suite, Op. 17, and in this form it was introduced by the New York Symphony Society on October 23, 1914.

The suite is in five movements, the program for each of which is described by the composer.

I. Prelude: A garden on a fine summer afternoon.

II. Entrance of the Ants: They industriously explore the garden until they find a rose petal which they carry off with great difficulty.

III. Dance of the Butterfly: The gay creature dances into the spider's web, where she dies after a brief struggle.

IV. Hatching of the Ephemera; Dance of the Ephemera.

V. Funeral March of the Ephemera: All the insects join with great pomp in the funeral procession, after the Death of the Spider. Night falls on the solitary garden.

Recommended recording: CM-X23 (Straram Orchestra—Straram).

### *Rapsodie Flamande*

Composed in 1936, and first performed by the Philharmonic Society of Brussels under Kleiber on December 12, 1936, the *Rapsodie Flamande*, Op. 56, is a work of nationalist character. M. Hoëree described it as follows: "The first part of the work sets in broad grandeur the theme of the Siege of Bergen-op-Zoom. The discourse becomes more animated, and we see successively the 'Song of the Beggars,' very rhythmic, 'The Spinner,' the truculent 'Karel-tje' which finds its irony in trumpet tones, while a Berceuse in the strings forms an oasis of tenderness before the peroration in which the themes return to provide a brilliant conclusion."

## SYMPHONIES

### *Symphony No. 3 in G minor*

To celebrate its fiftieth anniversary, the Boston Symphony Orchestra commissioned Albert Roussel to write a new symphony; and his third, Op. 42, was introduced by the orchestra under Koussevitzky on October 24, 1930. Paul Landormy calls this "one of his masterpieces, and one of the most beautiful symphonies produced by the French school." It is in four movements (Allegro; Adagio; Vivace; Allegro con spirito) which are bound together into a unity by a short theme of five notes which appears and reappears throughout the symphony.

Analyzing the symphony, Landormy wrote: "The first movement is energetic, with a beautiful continuous rhythm which does not stop to breathe and leads us all at one stroke to the end of the section. . . . The Adagio . . . opens with a long expressive phrase, quite movingly sung by the violins. Then comes a sort of march, led by the wood-winds. The middle part is a fugue. . . . The Vivace, a sort of valse-scherzo, is delightfully spirited. The Allegro con spirito concludes the work brilliantly, with happy passages, graceful and stirring, for flute and violin solo.

"He has perhaps never shown himself so glowing in his outpouring of

melodies," concludes Landormy; "has never evinced so much freedom or breadth in the development."

*Symphony No. 4 in A major*

Roussel's Fourth Symphony, Op. 53, was composed in 1935 and introduced by the Padeloup Orchestra under the baton of Albert Wolff (to whom the work is dedicated) on October 19, 1935. At this first performance the work was received so enthusiastically that the conductor had to repeat the Scherzo movement.

Denyse Bertrand thus describes Roussel's Fourth: "An allegro with an incisive theme set off by vari-colored orchestration is concise, quite in the composer's best style. The adagio, mysterious and tender, rises gradually with an expanding songfulness. The scherzo, short, light, very rhythmic, contrasts agreeably with a finale of pleasing grace, written without vigor and sounding delightfully."

## SAINT-SAËNS

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS, b. Paris, 1835. In 1848 he became a pupil at the Paris Conservatory, where he studied with Benoist and Halévy. After leaving the Conservatory, he became organist in a Paris church and, at the same time, composed his First Symphony, which was well received. In 1857 he was appointed organist at the Madeleine, and, in 1861, a teacher of the piano at the Niedermeyer School. In 1871 he helped to found the Société Nationale de Musique. Despite these varied activities he did not neglect composing, and soon achieved a position of importance among the French composers of his time. Recognition came to him officially when in 1868 he was appointed a member of the Legion of Honor. In 1881, he was elected to the Institut. He died in Algiers in 1921.

SAINT-SAËNS was one of the most productive composers of the past generation. It is a formidable task even to list the titles of all the works he wrote in every possible form, let alone to evaluate them.

Analyzing the general traits of Saint-Saëns's best works, M. D. Calvocoressi described the "surpassing excellence of his technique . . . his lucidity, his versatility, his sense of proportion, and the perfection of what he achieved within the limits of his outlook—limits carefully thought out, deliberately adopted, which he never fell short of nor overstepped. . . . His qualities of emotion and imagination were inferior to his capacity for building and working out, but what his works lack in glow and profundity they almost make up for in technical interest and beautiful finish, in fineness of proportion and perfection of texture."

"He may not have the rugged power of a Berlioz," adds Arthur Hervey.

"the emotional feeling of a Gounod, the mystic fervor of a César Franck, the insinuating charm of a Massenet, but he possessed an extraordinary faculty for assimilation, and certain characteristics peculiarly his own. He has been taxed with dryness, with lacking that warmth of feeling which vivifies a work and establishes a communication between the composer and his audience. The fact is that, of all composers, Saint-Saëns is most difficult to describe. He eludes you at every moment—the elements constituting his musical personality are so varied in their nature, yet they seem to blend in so remarkable a fashion. . . . Saint-Saëns is a typical Frenchman. . . . He is preëminently witty. . . . It is this quality which has enabled him to attack the driest forms of art and render them bearable."

## CONCERTOS

### 'Cello Concerto

#### *Concerto in A minor*

Saint-Saëns composed two concertos for 'cello and orchestra, of which the first, in A minor, Op. 33, is the more popular. Composed in 1873, it was introduced by August Tolbecque (to whom the work is dedicated) and the Paris Conservatory Orchestra on January 19, 1873.

Though the work is in three movements, it is played without a pause. The rhapsodic and robust subject that opens the concerto is used throughout the work as an integrating link; the second theme of the first movement is more lyrical and gentle in character. In the second movement, Allegretto, we have light, elfin writing of which Saint-Saëns was a master; it is in his most graceful and ingratiating manner. The last movement, finale, is virtuoso music in which the soloist is permitted to give a dazzling demonstration of his technical powers. The music is electrifying.

Recommended recording: CM-X182 (Piatigorsky; Chicago Symphony—Stock).

### Piano Concertos

Saint-Saëns wrote five concertos for piano and orchestra. They are, in the words of Vuillemin, "radiantly wrought, ingenious in their instrumental disposition, often rich in the picturesque, dominating the ensemble of the composer's works." Of these concertos, the second in G minor and the fourth in D minor are the most celebrated.

#### *Concerto in G minor*

Saint-Saëns Second Piano Concerto, Op. 22, was composed at the suggestion of Anton Rubinstein who, in 1868, proposed to Saint-Saëns that they give a concert together. For that concert, Saint-Saëns wrote a new concerto. The concert took place on May 13, 1868 in Paris, and the concerto was performed by the composer himself, with Anton Rubinstein conducting the orchestra.



The composer dedicated his concerto to Franz Liszt. "The form of it is new and very happy," Liszt wrote to Saint-Saëns. "The interest of the three portions goes on increasing, and you take into account the effect of the pianist without sacrificing anything of the ideas of the composer. . . . At the very outset the prelude on the Pedal G is striking and imposing. After a very happy inspiration, you do wisely to repeat it at the end of the first movement and to accompany it this time with some chords."

The first movement, *Andante sostenuto*, opens with a brief cadenza for the piano which becomes more and more brilliant until the orchestra interrupts with two powerful chords. The first theme is then stated by the piano alone, and with its elaborations and transformations dominates the entire movement. The second movement (*Allegro scherzando*) is delicate, charming, graceful, and buoyant; while the closing *Presto* is forceful bravura music in which the principal theme is a tarantella.

Recommended recording: VM-150 (Arthur de Greef; New Symphony Orchestra—Ronald).

### *Concerto in D minor*

The D minor concerto is Saint-Saëns's fourth for piano and orchestra and was introduced at a Colonne concert in Paris on October 31, 1875.

Charles Malherbe has thus analyzed it: "Although divided into two parts, it really contains, after the manner of the classic symphony, four movements: *Allegro moderato*, *Andante*, *Allegro vivace*, and *Allegro*. But these movements, instead of being isolated and each one corresponding to a separate piece are united two by two and so lead not to four but to two conclusions: an economy of formula more in accordance with the musical habits of our time. . . . The themes are distinct, peculiar to each movement, but they intermingle at times in the developments, and the return establishes a sort of natural bond between the different portions of the work. Thus the *Andante* in 4/4 of the first section is transformed to triple time in the second, and the first *Allegro* reappears with a different theme in the *Finale*.

"The work begins with a sort of free prelude, *Allegro moderato*. . . . A theme of eight measures is given out alternately by the orchestra and the pianoforte; it is treated now contrapuntally, now in free preluding fashion, somewhat after the manner of a cadenza. This species of introduction leads to the main body of the movement, an *Andante*. . . . The second movement, *Allegro vivace*, begins with a lively *scherzando*. The theme of the prelude to the first movement reappears in a faster tempo. There is a short *Andante* with reminiscences of the first movement. This leads to the *Finale* (*Allegro*). . . . A theme that has the character of a folk song is developed energetically and brilliantly somewhat after the manner of the rondo."

Recommended recording: CM-566 (Casadesus; New York Philharmonic—Rodzinski).

## OPERA

*Samson et Dalila*

In three acts, book by Ferdinand Lemaire, introduced at the Hoftheater in Weimar on December 2, 1877.

The idea of writing an opera on the Biblical tale of Samson and Delilah (Book of Judges) first came to Saint-Saëns in 1868, but not until some years later did he complete the work. On March 26, 1875 the first act of the opera was introduced at a Colonne concert. The audience and the critics were hostile. "Never has a more complete absence of melody made itself felt than in this drama," reported Henri Cohen. "And when to the lack of melodic motives there are added a harmony at times extremely daring and an instrumentation which nowhere rises above the level of the ordinary, you will have some idea of what *Samson* is like."

Repeatedly turned down by the Paris opera houses, *Samson et Dalila* was not heard in its entirety until Franz Liszt presented it in Weimar on December 2, 1877. Subsequently, by a circuitous route that stretched through Brussels, Rouen, and the Château d'Eau in Paris, the opera finally reached the Paris Opera on November 23, 1892. By this time, Saint-Saëns was not only one of the most celebrated French composers of his time, but an opera composer of renown. His masterpiece, *Samson*, therefore, was now heard by more receptive and sympathetic ears; and it was a triumph.

It has remained successful ever since. Its melodic charm, its freshness of spirit, its engaging vitality have kept it on the opera stages of the world. The "Latin art" of Saint-Saëns (as Romain Rolland described his music) appears in this opera at its purest and best. Here we have "beautiful speech and honest thought, and we cannot but feel their charm. His music strikes us by its calm, its tranquil harmonies, its velvety modulations, its crystal clearness, its smooth-flowing style, and an elegance that cannot be put into words."

The Biblical story is well-known. Samson take the Philistine Delilah as his mistress. But, knowing that he does not really love her, she hates him and so responds to the suggestion of the high priest of Dagon that she find out the source of Samson's great strength. On learning that it comes from his hair, she cuts this off, and then calls the Philistines to capture him. Captured, Samson goes blind, and becomes the butt of the Philistines' ridicule. At the feast of Dagon, he seizes the pillar of the temple, to which he is tied, and brings down the building upon himself and his enemies.

The most frequently heard portions of the opera are the world-famous aria for contralto, "*Mon cœur s'ouvre*" from Act II, and the Ballet music of Act III. The contralto aria, "*Printemps qui commence*," in Act I, is also well known.

Recommended recordings: "*Printemps qui commence*," C-71058 (Castagna); "*Amour! viens aider ma faiblesse*," V-1413 (Swarthout); "*Mon cœur s'ouvre*,"

C-71058 (Castagna); "*Vois ma misère!*" C-9121M (Thill); Ballet Music, V-12318 (Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Carnival of Animals*

Nowhere else did Saint-Saëns show such an engaging and seductive sense of humor as in this fanciful set of zoölogical pictures for two pianos and orchestra, which he composed in 1886 (published posthumously). His characterizations of the different animals are by turns witty, brilliant, satiric, and tender: the use of the piano and contrabass to describe the elephant (with motives borrowed from *The Damnation of Faust*); the leaping figures in the two pianos that suggest the kangaroos; the imitation of the cuckoo in the clarinet; and the deservedly famous melody for solo 'cello to represent the swan—these are only a few of the many pleasing moments in this charming score.

The sections of the work are as follows: I. *Introduction et Marche du Lion*; *Poules et Coqs*; *Hémiones*; *Tortues*; *L'Éléphant*; *Kangourous*; *Aquarium*; *Personnages à longues oreilles*; *Le coucou au fond des bois*; *Volière*; *Pianistes*; *Fossiles*; *Le Cygne*; *Final*.

Recommended recording: VM-785 (Behrend; Levin; Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

### *Danse Macabre*

Of the four symphonic poems composed by Saint-Saëns, the third—*Danse Macabre*, Op. 40—is the most frequently heard. Always a profound admirer of Liszt's symphonic poems, Saint-Saëns was inevitably drawn to that musical form. He composed *Danse Macabre* in 1874, inspired by a poem by Henri Cazalis. When it was introduced by the Colonne Orchestra on January 24, 1875, it was poorly received. Many in the audience thought it was the height of poor taste for Saint-Saëns to describe the rattling of a skeleton by a xylophone! But when the work was repeated two weeks later, the audience overcame its original displeasure and prejudices to acclaim it; the work was encored. The great success which the music henceforth encountered inspired the composer to arrange the work for two pianos. Franz Liszt transcribed it later for solo piano.

The music follows the text of the poem. We hear the hour of midnight striking (harp). Death tunes his fiddle. Then a demoniac dance begins, pronounced by flute. Death plays his own tune. The dance grows wilder. From the xylophone comes the rattling of the bones. Later the strains of the *Dies Irae* are heard. Faster and faster grows the pace, until the crowing of the cock announces the approach of dawn. A last strain of the dance, and the ghostly dancers fade away.

Recommended recording: V-14162 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

## SYMPHONY

*Symphony in C minor*

Saint-Saëns's best known symphony is his third in C minor, Op. 78 (for organ and orchestra). It was composed in 1886 for the London Philharmonic Orchestra, which introduced it on May 19 of that year under the baton of the composer.

The composer has himself provided an analysis for his work: "This symphony is divided into two parts. . . . Nevertheless it includes practically all the traditional four movements: the first, checked in the development, serves as an introduction to the Adagio, and the Scherzo is connected, after the same manner, with the Finale. The composer has thus avoided, to a certain extent, the interminable repetitions which are more and more disappearing from instrumental music. . . .

"After an introductory Adagio of a few plaintive measures, the string quartet sets forth the initial theme, which is somber and agitated (*Allegro moderato*). The first transformation of this theme leads to a second motive, which is distinguished by greater tranquillity. . . . A second transformation of the initial theme includes now and then the plaintive notes of the introduction. . . . After a variation (in arabesques) performed by the violins, the second transformation of the original theme of the *Allegro* appears again, and brings with it a vague feeling of unrest, which is heightened by dissonant harmonies. These soon give way to the theme of the Adagio. . . . This first movement ends in a coda of mystical character. . . .

"The second movement begins with an energetic theme (*Allegro moderato*), which is followed immediately by a third transformation of the initial theme in the first movement, more agitated than it was before, introducing a fantastic mood that is frankly disclosed in the *presto*. . . . This tricky gaiety is interrupted by an expressive phrase for strings. The repetition of the *Allegro moderato* is followed by a second *presto*, which at first is apparently a repetition of the first *presto*; but scarcely has it begun before a new theme is heard, grave, austere, strongly contrasted with the fantastic music. . . . The phrase rises to orchestral heights, and rests there as in the blue of a clear sky. After a vague reminiscence of the initial theme of the first movement, a *Maestoso* announces the approaching triumph of the calm and lofty thought. The initial theme of the first movement, completely transformed, is now played by divided strings and the pianoforte (four hands) and repeated by the organ with the full orchestra. . . . An episode of a tranquil and pastoral character is twice repeated. A brilliant coda, in which the initial theme by a last transformation takes the form of a violin figure, ends the work."

Recommended recording: VM-100 (Symphony Orchestra—Coppola).

# SATIE

ERIK SATIE, b. Honfleur, Calvados, 1866. Entered the Paris Conservatory in 1883, but was too unbridled a spirit to be happy there. Leaving conservatory training behind him, he had to fill in his musical education as best he could. He began composing his strange piano pieces in 1887, and soon acquired considerable notoriety. In 1905, already established as a composer, he decided to return to music study, and for three years was a pupil of d'Indy and Roussel at the Schola Cantorum. By 1910, he was accepted by the younger French composers as their prophet. Though his influence upon French music was profound, he died in poverty, and comparative obscurity, near Paris in 1925.

ERIK SATIE was one of the most successful wits in music; he is sometimes loosely described as the "father of humor in music." "*Il faut être rigolo*," he would frequently say, and in his music he would express himself with a wry wit. He used weird titles (*A Skinny Dance*, *She Who Talks Too Much*, *Pieces in the Form of a Pear*). He gave weird instructions in his printed music: "Like a nightingale with a toothache." "He was," wrote Rudhyar D. Chennevière, "a typical product of the beginning of his century, of this exhausted civilization which jeers in order not to look death in the face. And he is the buffoon who cracks his punning jokes in increasing number, pushing them to extravagance, in order to make the neurotic beings who march past him laugh despite themselves."

Although Satie wrote some remarkable pieces for the piano—in their technique and idiom years ahead of their time—he is less important as a composer than as an influence. It is recognized that but for him we might not have had Debussy, for it was Satie who suggested to Debussy that he write an opera about Pelleas and Melisande and who led Debussy to try new expressions and untried paths. Indeed, Satie's influence on most of the younger French composers of his day was so marked that much of the music composed in Paris during this period stemmed directly from his work. Finally, it was Satie who was the inaugurating spirit of that modern school of composers known as "The Six." The esthetic ideas that he promulgated, as well as his music, helped to formulate the musical aspirations of six younger French musicians: Honegger, Milhaud, Auric, Poulenc, Tailleferre (a woman), and Durey. Feeling themselves linked by common ideals, they united in a school of composition under the spiritual guidance of Satie—a school which, after 1920, became known throughout the musical world as "The French Six." Its principal aim was a reversion to simplicity, and its favorite bent (in imitation of Satie) was towards satire and wit. The Six were not, however, destined for a long life. A disagreement between Satie and Auric was the first rift in the musical union. Then the various members began to discover that it was not feasible for several different strong personalities to work in one and the same style. Before long, Honegger, Milhaud, Auric, and Poulenc began to pull away from the group,

each to compose music in his own way; and from that moment the "French Six" ceased to exist.

## PIANO MUSIC

### *Gymnopédies*

The "gymnopedia" was a periodical festival in ancient Sparta, lasting for several days, in which naked youths celebrated their gods in choruses and dancing. In 1888, Satie composed a suite of three pieces recreating these dances musically. All are languorous pieces. "In each," wrote W. Wright Roberts, "the ideals are poured into a similar mould, but there are slight variations in phrase-balance and in harmonic shading. . . . Satie's way of writing is to present a 'shadow-show' in sound; 'phantom figures' strange enough sometimes, in all conscience, but nearly always with a sculptural quality about them." Debussy arranged the first and third of these dances for orchestra.

Recommended recording: orchestral transcription by Debussy, V-1965 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

### *Pièces froides*

The *Pièces froides*, composed in 1897, is in two groups: I. *Airs à faire fuir*; II. *Danse de travers*. Abstract and unemotional pieces, they nevertheless have—as Roberts pointed out—"more spirit and less constraint than the composer's previous work. The writing is more athletic. . . . These pieces are classical in a true sense, classical in their firmness and economy of workmanship and in their broad impersonality. . . . The *Airs à faire fuir* are lighter in spirit."

### *Sarabandes*

These three slow, grave dances—reincarnating an old Spanish dance form—were composed by Satie in 1887, and were the first of his challenging pieces for the piano. "They contain harmonies," explains Roberts, "which in 1887 were either a scandal or a revelation . . . rich chains of chords in the ninth, lapsing and modulating in luscious rainbow hues, yet kept from cloying us too quickly by the subtle use of common chords which the study of old polyphony can give. . . . The dances have a grave beauty of melodic phrase, largely caught from plainsong, and a unity of design in the gradual filling out of the rhythm which we notice in playing the three in succession."

# SCARLATTI

DOMENICO SCARLATTI, b. Naples, 1685, son of the famous opera composer Alessandro Scarlatti. Studied music with his father, and later achieved fame as a virtuoso on the harpsichord. In 1709, an appointment to the musical staff of Queen Marie Casimire of Poland turned him to the writing of operas. Six years later, he began writing church music, following his appointment as maestro di cappella at St. Peter's in Rome. During the last twenty-five years of his life he lived in Spain as music master to the royal family. It was during this period that his fame as a virtuoso and as a composer of harpsichord music made him known throughout Europe. He died in Madrid in 1757.

**T**HOUGH Domenico Scarlatti composed operas and church music, his fame derives exclusively from the remarkable short pieces he wrote for harpsichord—works with which, it might be said, the modern age of piano playing was born.

## PIANO MUSIC

### *Esercizi (Sonatas)*

It was in Spain, and for the Infanta Barbara, that Scarlatti composed the harpsichord *Esercizi* (exercises) which have given him a permanent place in musical history. This, for several reasons. First, they foreshadowed the future sonata form; indeed, they are today commonly referred to as sonatas. They are usually divided into two parts, each part being repeated—a structure that clearly points ahead to the classic sonata. And Bülow suggested that some of their wittier parts anticipate the Beethoven “scherzo.” Also, they inaugurated the modern style of playing a keyboard instrument, introducing a new type of virtuosity—runs, arpeggios, and the crossing of hands—which definitely heralded a new era in keyboard technique. Finally, Scarlatti made the harpsichord speak a fresher, richer, and more varied language than it had theretofore been thought capable of. All the subtleties of musical expression were at his command; he could give voice to wit, grace, drama, or chaste beauty, and always with enchantment. “His instincts for the requirements of his instrument,” wrote C. Hubert Parry, “were so marvelous, and his development of technique so wide and rich, that he seems to spring full-armed into the view of history. . . . He knows well the things that will tell, and how to awaken interest in a new mood when the effects of any particular line are exhausted. Considering how little attention had been given to technique before his time, his feats of agility are really marvelous. The variety and incisiveness of his rhythms, the peculiarities of his harmony, his wild whirling rapid passages, his rattling shakes, his leaps from end to end of the keyboard, all indicate a preternaturally vivacious temperament; and unlike many later virtuosos, he is thoroughly alive to the meaning of music as an art, and does not make his feats of dexterity his principal object. They serve as the means to convey his

singularly characteristic ideas in forms as abstract as the modern sonatas. The definiteness of his musical ideas is one of the most surprising things about him. . . . He left behind him a most copious legacy to mankind, but his successors were very slow to avail themselves of it. . . . His influence did not bear full fruit till the development of genuine pianoforte playing began."

Some of the best known of the Scarlatti Sonatas include: C major, Longo edition 104; B minor, L. 33; *Pastorale* (D minor, L. 413); *Capriccio* (E major, L. 375); *Cat Fugue*—so called because it was believed to have been inspired by a cat's running along Scarlatti's keyboard (G minor, L. 499); *Tempo di ballo* (D major, L. 463); *Burlesca* (G minor, L. 338); *Cortège* (E major, L. 23); *Barcarolle* (A major, L. 132), etc.

The modern Italian composers Tommasini and Casella arranged Scarlatti sonatas into orchestral suites: *The Good-Humored Ladies* is a ballet by Tommasini brought to prominence by Diaghilev; *Scarlattiana* is an extended work for piano and orchestra by Casella.

Recommended recordings: Twenty sonatinas, Scarlatti Sonata Society (Landowska); Fourteen Sonatinas, CM-298 (Pessl); Eleven Sonatinas, CM-372 (Casadesus).

## SCHMITT

FLORENT SCHMITT, b. Blamont, Meurthe-et-Moselle, France, 1870. Entered the Paris Conservatory in 1889, there to become a pupil of Dubois, Massenet, and Fauré. In 1900, he won the Prix de Rome. Six years later, a concert of his works in Paris first brought him to public attention. He attracted further attention with his *Quintet* in 1909, and thereafter assumed a prominent position among the French composers of the twentieth century. From 1922 to 1924 he was director of the Lyons Conservatory. In 1932 he visited the United States. He was elected to the Institut de France in 1936.

SCHMITT's style has been analyzed by M. D. Calvocoressi in the following way: "His music remains free from the abstract intellectuality and formalism that are so dangerous to all arts, and reveals a temperament loving sounds and rhythms for their own intrinsic beauty; it possesses that inwardness, that effusive lyricism through which it at times differs from the music of the 'Impressionist school'. . . . He does not scruple to use, at times, the simplest and so to speak the most massive dynamic effects; he shuns neither grandiloquence, nor insistence, nor any of the plain, if effective, means of classical art, never to be met with in the works of a Debussy or a Ravel. But with him they are never mere rhetorical expedients, and nowise resemble the stereotyped airs and graces of the post-classicists. In fact, that straightforward idiom, that



epic diction, being natural to Schmitt in some of his moods, appear in his music alive and original."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *La Tragédie de Salomé*

It was during his travels in North Africa, and as far east as Turkey, following his winning of the Prix de Rome, that Schmitt absorbed the background and atmosphere which he later projected so colorfully in his most famous orchestral work. Schmitt first conceived *Salomé* as a "mute-drama" for the stage, and in this form it was mimed by Loie Fuller in 1907. Later Schmitt decided to make an orchestral suite of it. Subsequently, however, it was used as the background music for a Diaghilev ballet.

*La Tragédie de Salomé*, Op. 50—dedicated to Igor Stravinsky—was inspired by a poem by Robert d'Humières. It is in two sections, which in turn are subdivided into five episodes; these follow the text of the prose-poem closely.

"Florent Schmitt has depicted the lurid scenario in music of unexampled vividness of exotic imagination," wrote Edward Burlingame Hill. "His gifts for construction, contrapuntal mastery, and appropriate harmonic luxuriance have fired his inventive powers to produce one of the most graphically dramatic works in the range of French music. . . . At once the prelude announces a mood of morbid tragedy, leading into the brilliant 'dance of the pearls.' The second part continues and enlarges upon the atmosphere of the prelude. A particularly felicitous stroke of dramatic appositeness lies in the episode in which Schmitt uses a folksong of Aïca, collected by Salvātor Peitavi on the shores of the Dead Sea. Given at first to a single voice behind the scenes, this chant, admirably harmonized, increases gradually in intensity and emotional range until it leads directly into the dance of lightning. The dance of terror and the destruction of Herod's palace form a gigantic climax to a work of many unique qualities."

## QUINTET

### *Quintet in B minor*

It was the Piano Quintet, Op. 51, which firmly established Florent Schmitt as a composer of outstanding importance. Composed in 1908, it has remained to this day his masterpiece. When it was introduced, M. D. Calvocoressi wrote that it was "one of the most moving, most generous, and revealing creations of the past few years." Poueigh, also reviewing it, said: "Endowed with a nobility of thought realized with the utmost of skill, this work of enormous dimensions . . . deserves to be considered among the highest manifestations of contemporary chamber music."

H. T. Parker has written the following analysis of the work: "It is very long

and it runs in three close-packed movements. The first begins with a slow introduction that leads into an orthodox allegro. As classic form prescribes, the slow movement follows in ample developments. A rapid and highly colored finale ensues. The melodic ideas are clear, vigorous, and fertile; the harmony well-filled and often highly original; the modulation incessant and stout. The music never dries into a thematical formula or runs thinly and vaguely away. It gives not a hint of the fashionable Parisian recipes for chamber music. . . . A young athlete of music might have written the Quintet, but a young athlete who could think and feel, who was sensitive to ample beauty, who was master of his own powers."

## SCHÖNBERG

ARNOLD SCHÖNBERG, b. Vienna, 1874. As a pupil of Zemlinsky he composed his first works, romantic in character. His compositorial style underwent radical change after 1900 as he passed from Wagnerian romanticism to atonality. Subsequently, his style became crystallized when he perfected an arbitrary new system of tonality comprising twelve different tones, around which he built his music. During the First World War he served in the Austrian Army. Subsequently he reestablished himself in Vienna, where he composed his music, taught, and helped to create a school of music glorifying the twelve-tone system. In 1933, Schönberg settled permanently in the United States, joining the music faculty of the University of Southern California at Los Angeles.

ACTUALLY, there are two Schönbergs, and not one. The first is the composer of the early works, profoundly influenced by Wagner and trying to write in Wagner's vein; this is the composer of the celebrated *Verklärte Nacht*. The second is the Schönberg who erects his musical structures on the framework of the twelve-tone system; this is the composer of that cerebral music which has antagonized half the music world and shocked the other half—the composer of *Pierrot Lunaire*, *Six Pieces for the Piano*, *Five Pieces for the Orchestra*, and the String Quartet No. 3.

"Schönberg's art is solitary," wrote Hans Gutman. "He pursued the path of his peculiar genius with such wonderful pertinacity that the average auditor could hardly follow him any longer. He drove expressionism in music to the furthest possible point. He completely unraveled the individual voices, and so shattered the harmonic groundwork that nothing further remained to be accomplished in this direction."

In the future's final analysis of Schönberg, it will probably be maintained that he was greater as an historical influence than as a composer. Except for *Verklärte Nacht*, nothing of Schönberg's is now heard often, if heard at all. His twelve-tone music belongs definitely to an experimental era. It opened

new vistas for music and showed new harmonic and contrapuntal possibilities; its influence on an entire school of composers (of whom Alban Berg was the most important) was profound. But it no longer stands on its own feet. Today, Schönberg's music neither shocks nor magnetizes nor pleases.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Verklärte Nacht*

In the closing years of the nineteenth century, the esthetes of Vienna would gather at the Café Landtmann, opposite the Burgtheater, to discuss questions of art. Among those who came here regularly was the young Arnold Schönberg, then an orchestra 'cellist and a pupil of Zemlinsky. Over their cups of coffee *mit Schlagsahne*, the young men would discuss the "new art" tirelessly, lavishing their youthful adoration on Wagner in general, and *Tristan und Isolde* in particular. Young Schönberg (to whom the idea of recasting the tonal system into a new and personal mould was still many years away) regarded the Wagnerian music-drama as the true "music of the future"; and to Wagner he was ready to pay that highest of all flattery—imitation.

In 1899, when Schönberg was twenty-five, he composed a sextet inspired by a poem of Richard Dehmel and called *Verklärte Nacht*. This sextet (restored by Schönberg in 1917 for chamber orchestra, the form in which it is best known today) is unmistakably the work of a Wagner-intoxicated man.

The music reveals the transfiguration of the world to a lover after he has forgiven his sweetheart for her sin. The two are walking through a forest in the moonlight. The woman confesses to the man at her side that she has sinned—that she is to have a child which is not his. Guilt burns within her as she realizes that she loves only him. The man speaks warm words of understanding and forgiveness; she will bear the child for *him*. They embrace each other tenderly, and their lips join. Then the two continue their walk through the forest.

Schönberg's tonal palette in *Verklärte Nacht* is rich with colors; the harmonic texture of the work is luscious, the atmosphere sensuous. The young composer knew his score of *Tristan* well.

To present-day concertgoers, accustomed to the brutal sound of Schönberg's atonal *Pierrot Lunaire* and the *Five Pieces for the Orchestra*, it may come as a surprise to learn that this warm and romantic work at first offended Viennese audiences. One Viennese musical organization refused to accept it for performance because it was harmonically too daring! When the Arnold Rosé Quartet first played it, it evoked derisive laughter that occasionally drowned out the music; and at the end of the performance the whistling, catcalls, and seat-banging registered the protest of an outraged audience. Today, this music neither electrifies nor startles; instead, it enchants. For surely it is the most beautiful work that Schönberg has ever composed.

Recommended recording: VM-1005 (St. Louis Symphony—Golschmann).

# SCHUBERT

FRANZ PETER SCHUBERT, b. Vienna, 1797. Studied at the Konvikt School, which trained choristers for the Imperial Court Choir. When his voice broke, he became a schoolmaster, at the same time devoting his spare hours to composing. His fertility was incredible. In his eighteenth year alone, he composed two symphonies, two masses, five operas, four sonatas, several small choral works, and about one hundred and fifty songs. It was not long before he abandoned the task of schoolmaster (which he detested) to concentrate exclusively on the writing of music. He worked in an obscurity out of which not even a few major performances (operas at the Kärntnertheater and the Theater-an-der-Wien, for example) could not snatch him. His life was uneventful. He died (in Vienna, in 1828) as he had lived—an unknown composer.

IN the entire realm of art it would be difficult to find many examples of the kind of creative genius possessed by Franz Schubert. Not that he was the greatest composer who ever lived; certainly the horizons of Beethoven, Bach, and Mozart were far wider. But for sheer native gifts, he is excelled only by Mozart. Music came to Schubert as naturally as breathing. He could create beauty as freely as the ordinary man talks in clichés. Every melodic idea that sprang in him soared on lyric wings. And these ideas seemed inexhaustible both in their endless variety of mood and in their copiousness. As he himself once confessed, he was unable to complete one work without having several others crowd in on his consciousness. Musical ideas came to him, not merely in a spontaneous flow, but in a veritable geyser eruption which he could not hope to curb or canalize into disciplined and formal order.

Herein lay his greatness as a composer—his greatness, and his weakness as well. His greatness, because it made him the most important composer of songs the world has known. He wrote songs—immortal songs—easily; he wrote them under all sorts of conditions, in every kind of setting, everywhere and anywhere where paper and quill were to be found. He wrote like an inspiration-intoxicated man. Of his finest songs, many a one was composed at a single sitting, in the white heat of inspiration; and no sooner did he finish one of them than his mind was invaded by another wondrous idea.

But this was his weakness, too. A song can be written in one feverish sitting; a symphony, a quartet, a piano sonata—never. Because ideas came so easily to him, so effortlessly, he never achieved the power of developing them, of subjecting them to that enlargement, elaboration, and transformation which are required in an extended work. Thus his larger compositions abound with remarkable thematic material; and, just as often, his developments are stilted and self-conscious. His technique was not of the best; to the last day of his life he lamented that he had not mastered counterpoint. Thus, at those moments in the larger works when a composer must depend more upon craftsmanship than upon instinct and inspiration, Schubert was capable of second-rate writing. But when he let his pen fly in his hand, driven by an uncontrollable force, the music suddenly rose to Alpine peaks of eloquence.

This is not to imply, however, that in his more ambitious works he did not produce music that commands admiration and affection. Sensitive, emotional, tender, he was an apostle of beauty, and he spoke of beauty in unforgettable accents. His music is a world of beauty, sometimes gay, sometimes melancholy—a beauty that comes from the heart and stabs the heart more poignantly than pain.

Of his place in musical history, Guido Adler wrote: "Schubert stands at the turning point between two schools and two styles. In the history of music he occupies a position quite similar to that of Kleist in the history of literature. Both are traveling on the straight road from classicism to romanticism. . . . Whereas Kleist imports romantic ideas into the drama, Schubert restricts himself to lyricism. . . . His every work, whether vocal or instrumental, is pervaded by song, and herein lies, as regards form, the main difference between him and the classic composers, who employ the song only restrictedly. . . . As a true genius, he instinctively fulfilled his mission. The historian cannot, therefore, set Schubert down as a hybrid between classic and romantic, but will classify [Schubert's] work as a synthesis, in accordance with his own individuality and his position in point of time."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Rosamunde: Incidental Music*

Like so many other Schubert gems, the incidental music to *Rosamunde* lay dusty and neglected for many years and was discovered only accidentally. In 1867, George Grove—suspecting that a mine of Schubert gold lay hidden and forgotten—decided to search Vienna, and took with him young Arthur Sullivan (then twenty-five years old). Their destination was the publishing house of Spina, which had succeeded Diabelli. "Spina willingly turned the two men loose among heaps of unprinted music scores, letters, and other long-neglected material," records Elizabeth C. Moore, "and they went to work: Grove pulling out something that looked promising, and Sullivan playing it on the piano. Their pile of loot grew higher with every hour. By midnight they had recovered all the lost part-books of *Rosamunde*, a Trio, a *Stabat Mater*, and a great many songs. At two in the morning they stopped, played a triumphant game of leap-frog around Spina's room, and called it a day."

Schubert had composed this *Rosamunde* music for a stage production of the play by Wilhelmine von Chézy, which took place at the Theater-an-der-Wien in 1823. The play was a failure, and ran for only two nights. After that presentation, the Schubert music was completely forgotten until it was restored to the music world almost fifty years later.

The most famous single part of the music is, of course, the infectious Overture. Incidentally, this is not the overture which was played at the 1823 performance; the one used then was what we now know as the overture to

*Alfonso und Estrella*, while the overture now called the *Rosamunde* was originally written by Schubert for an opera called *Die Zauberharfe* (presented at the Theater-an-der-Wien in 1820). Famous, too, are the seductive and engaging Ballet Music, and the Third Entr'acte, the theme of which Schubert also used in his A minor Quartet and in a piano Impromptu.

Recommended recording: CM-343 (Hallé Orchestra—Harty).

## PIANO MUSIC

In writing for the piano, Schubert excelled in writing smaller pieces which foreshadowed the miniature gems by Schumann and Mendelssohn. "Schubert's pianism," wrote L. Dunton Green, "is all or nearly all in delicate shading; to be exact, in the shading of tone and color. . . . The beauty of his piano works lies in a subtlety of rhythm and restraint of expression."

Schubert's greatest works for solo piano are contained in the two volumes of Impromptus, Opp. 90 and 142, and the set of Moments Musicaux, Op. 94.

### *Impromptus*

In his analysis of the Schubert Impromptus, Albert E. Wier wrote: "Impromptu No. 1 in C major, in the first set, is constructed from a single phrase. This impromptu . . . seems to tell a story the nature of which is to be determined by the hearer. . . . The single voice carries on and on, suggesting the adventures of an individual which are periodically commented upon by a chorus. The scene seems to be ever-changing; serene for a while, then agitated as if some wild manifestation of nature were taking place. This impromptu creates a definite impression of beauty and mysticism which lingers on after the tones have died away. The light and merry style of Impromptu No. 2 in E flat, with its graceful triplet figures and the sharp contrasts of its broad and powerful trio section, reveals Schubert's unerring sense of balance in the shorter forms. The Impromptu No. 3 was originally written in G flat but was finally transposed a half-tone higher in deference to the limitations of many of the superficial piano students of the day. . . . The composition is like a nocturne in character, but totally lacking in the cheap sentiment usually associated with such pieces. The Impromptu No. 4 in the first set is another gem. Here the composer seems to deal with a more pictorial subject; the cascades and rapidly moving splashes of color suggest perhaps some of the more eerie forms like sunlight playing on a waterfall or filtering through foliage in a forest. . . . The second set does not quite reach the high level of the first four, but nevertheless contains much inspired music. The first and the last are in the key of F minor; the second in the relative major—A flat. The third Impromptu in B flat is one of Schubert's best attempts in the variation form."

Recommended recording: VM-494 (Fischer).

*Moments Musicaux*

Of the *Moments Musicaux*, Wier wrote: "The extraordinary naturalness and unadorned melodic beauty of the Impromptus are only exceeded by the restraint and delicacy of the six little *Moments Musicaux*; there is no padding; no striving after unnatural and, for Schubert, unattainable grandeur of expression. The brevity of the form precludes the objectionable features of the sonatas; the accompaniments contain nothing commonplace, and the musical ideas are of great clarity and distinction."

The world-famous *Moment Musical* is the one in F minor.

Recommended recording: VM-684 (Schnabel).

## QUARTETS

The string quartet, as F. Bonavia wrote, "becomes in [Schubert's] hands a most pliable medium equally suited for ideas of a tender, melodious nature (like the first movement of the A minor) or ideas of dramatic intensity (like the opening of the G minor). Perhaps the source of this happy affinity between medium and idea must be sought in the lyrical character of the music. . . . Schubert in the quartets retains much that is essentially of the song. His themes are, for the most part, 'singing themes'; the whole conception is lyrical rather than tragic or reflective; the music is conceived in a mode sufficiently remote from deep emotion to admit of song; it testifies to a certain peace of mind and heart, to a desire to express quiet satisfaction within, to add one more voice in harmony with the voices of Nature. . . . Schubert's quartets belong to the golden era of chamber music and constitute something without which even that great epoch would be much the poorer."

*Quartet in A minor*

It is not too much to say that in the entire realm of chamber-music literature there are no pages more beautiful than the first two movements of the A minor Quartet, Op. 29, composed by Schubert in 1824. H. L. Mencken once wrote that the slow movement of this Quartet was the most convincing proof of the existence of God. The beauty of the Quartet is of such another-worldly eloquence that it seems to have sprung from some celestial source.

Samuel L. Laciár has analyzed the quartet as follows: "The opening theme of the first movement is perhaps the most beautiful melodically of any similar subject in the quartets and is so perfect that development, never a strong point with Schubert, is virtually impossible. Nevertheless, the development section of the movement deals almost exclusively with this theme. The solo movement takes for its principal subject a melody of which Schubert was apparently fond, as he uses its principal theme no less than three times: in the quartet, in the Entr'acte in B-flat minor of the *Rosamunde* music, and in the No. 3 of the Impromptus Op. 142 for piano. The Menuetto is even more

Schubertian than the two earlier movements, and is one of the most characteristic, poetic, and personal pieces of music that he ever wrote. The finale has much more of the Hungarian flavor than the three other movements and the entire quartet shows a certainty and a mastery of the technical means of expression."

Recommended recording: VM-225 (Budapest Quartet).

### *Quartet in D minor ("Death and the Maiden")*

Schubert's D minor Quartet is subtitled "Death and the Maiden" because the composer incorporates into the second movement his famous song by that name, subjecting it then to a series of variations. Besides, the atmosphere of the song about death pervades the entire quartet and gives the entire work its dramatic and almost funereal atmosphere. The opening theme of the first movement, for example—a defiant challenge—is interpreted by Cobbett as a struggle with Death. And an almost febrile quality is felt in the third (Allegro Molto) and closing (Presto) movements. In the Presto movement, Schubert quotes briefly from his song *Der Erlkönig*, thereby again giving us suggestions of a struggle with Death.

Recommended recording VM-468 (Busch Quartet).

## QUINTETS

### Piano Quintet

#### *Quintet in A major ("Die Forelle")*

This work is unique in several respects. It is the first important work in chamber-music literature for the combination of piano and strings; its string instruments include a double-bass; and it is in five movements, the fourth of which is a set of variations on Schubert's famous song *Die Forelle* (The Trout).

In the summer of 1819, Schubert went with several of his friends on a holiday to Upper Austria. They were guests at the home of Paumgartner in Linz, where the evenings were filled with music-making, Schubert playing his works and Johann Vogl singing Schubert songs. One day Paumgartner suggested to Schubert that he write a chamber-music work which might utilize the song, *Die Forelle*, in one of its movements. Schubert complied—at the same time proving his phenomenal genius. He did not write the work as a score, but wrote each instrumental part separately; then, to enhance the feat, he played the piano part impromptu while the strings followed their music.

The joyousness of Schubert's vacation is reflected in this music which is among his most ebullient and light-hearted works; its spontaneity and freshness betray the speed with which it was written. In no other large work did Schubert produce so many ingratiating tunes, all of them carefree, spirited, full of irrepressible gaiety. The atmosphere of cheerfulness which pervades the entire work is not even dissipated in the slow movement (Andante), which



is quieter and more tender in tone than the first movement, but in which it would be difficult to find any suggestion of pain. The Scherzo is a brilliant morsel of heady spirits. The fourth movement (Andante) is a series of six variations on *Die Forelle*, and the finale (Allegro giusto) is full of Hungarian dash and abandon.

Recommended recording: VM-312 (Schnabel; Onnou; Prevost; Maas; Hobday).

### String Quintet

#### *Quintet in C major*

If one wished to point to two musical works which are at opposite poles of emotion, no examples could be more effective than the *Forelle* and the C major string quintets of Schubert—the gaiety of the *Die Forelle* Quintet contrasting with the melancholy of the C major. The C major belongs to the last year of Schubert's life, and in few other works did he express tragedy with such intensity; one might even go further and say that the slow movement, with its harrowing background of pizzicati, is one of the most pessimistic utterances in all music.

The C major Quintet (Op. 163) is Schubert's profoundest work for chamber-music ensembles, and it is one of his masterpieces—once again suggesting, as does the C major Symphony, how far he might have gone had he lived.

The Quintet is written for an unusual combination of two violins, viola, and two 'cellos. In this work, as Mark Brunswick pointed out, he arrived at "absolute originality not only of ideas but of instrumentation and form. There is nothing forced in this originality. . . . There is no remarkable subtlety of inter-relationship between various themes or movements in this quintet. . . . There is nothing essentially novel in the formal conception. . . . But the tremendous intensity of inspiration fills the broad lines to such an extent that a different type of economy and concentration is achieved nevertheless."

Recommended recording: CM-497 (Budapest Quartet; B. Heifetz).

## SONATAS

### Piano Sonatas

It is quite true that the Schubert piano sonatas are not of the magistral rank of his greatest songs, quartets, or symphonies. Yet they contain much Schubertian magic, and should not be considered stepchildren among Schubert's creative output.

In his piano sonatas, Schubert was never the adventurer, experimenter, or bold pioneer, as he frequently was in the *Lieder*. Beethoven's last sonatas, for example, are years in advance of Schubert in their structure and dynamics. Schubert was, to a large extent, satisfied with the form employed by Haydn

and Mozart. However, there is this important difference between Schubert and his predecessors: with Schubert not the form is important, but the idea, to a point where niceties of structure are often sacrificed. In Schubert we never find that exquisite attention to details of the architectonic construction, that inexorable logic of form, that beautiful sense of balance of design which characterize the greatest sonatas of Haydn and Mozart. But the best Schubert sonatas, particularly his last three, possess great emotional force; he did not permit the classical sonata form to smother his free romantic spirit. Retaining the structural outlines of that form, he made it sufficiently flexible and supple to let him sing unhampered.

It need hardly be said that his piano sonatas are marked by melodic inventiveness. Yet thematic fertility is not their only trait. More significant is the fact that they contain subtleties and delicate nuances of expression which seem to have come from him instinctively and which endow them with such poignant human qualities.

### *Sonata in B-flat major*

This is one of a set of three piano sonatas, published posthumously, which Schubert composed in his closing year of 1828 to crown his achievements in the piano-sonata form. A luxuriant wealth of thematic material is an outstanding quality of this work, but by no means is it the most important. More significantly, this work is the most poignant human document Schubert produced for the piano. Here, more than in any other of his piano sonatas, we find his extraordinary ability to translate musical values into human ones: to convert a modulation into an expression of pain; to endow a warm melodic line with emotional poignancy; to give a rhythmic figure the quality of a chuckle.

In his analysis of this masterpiece, Karl Kobald wrote that it is full of Schubertian melody, and that the themes are abundantly rich in imagery.

Recommended recording: CM-311 (Wolff).

## SONGS

With Franz Schubert, the German art song (or *Lied*) fulfilled its destiny for the first time. There is no need to paint the lily by saying, as some writers have, that the German *Lied* was born with Schubert. Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven wrote songs, and some of these are remarkable for feeling and melodic content. But it was Schubert who completely realized the artistic purpose of the song, who saw in it a drama in epitome in which words and music are inextricably one, each contributing to the other qualities of emotion, each supplementing the other in the creation of an artistic unity. That a boy of seventeen could have composed *Gretchen am Spinnrade* and followed it one year later with *Der Erlkönig*—and this with no precedent to guide him—is one of the most potent testimonies to Schubert's native genius and his infallible instinct.

Never before had the artistic mission of the song been so completely, so unfalteringly realized. These two songs are miniature dramas in which, instinctively, Schubert uses every musical resource at his command (melody and harmony and rhythm, modulation and enharmonic changes, full-developed lyricism and declamation) to recreate in musical terms not only the moving drama of Goethe's lyrics, but also each of its changing nuances and subtle transformations of moods and feelings.

"It was with Schubert," wrote Rudolph Felber, "that the epoch of the new song began. . . . Schubert was to the song what Beethoven was to the symphony, Wagner to the music drama, Chopin to piano music—the pioneer and pilot of a new art, an art whose foundations and typical characteristics he established and whose whole later growth he fertilised."

With Schubert the *Lied* became autonomous, freeing itself from dependence on opera, acquiring its texture and spirit from the words it was expressing, achieving its own independent place in art. His genius seized upon the poem and translated it immediately into musical terms. Music was to be true to every phrase and emotion in the poem. The accompaniment was to add meaning to the song, setting its mood, accentuating and dramatizing it: in *Gretchen* one could hear the whirring of the spinning wheel; in *Der Leiermann*, the monotonous tune of the hand-organ; in *Der Erlkönig*, the pulse and stress of the storm; in *Der Doppelgänger*, the mystery of the shadow.

What a wide gamut of feeling, atmosphere, temperament he was able to encompass with his songs! He could touch an almost dazzling spirituality (*An die Musik*, *Litanei*, and *Ave Maria*), and could be light-hearted (*Die Forelle*); he could be contagiously gay (*Auf dem Wasser zu singen*), and he could strike a funereal note of chilling morbidity (*Der Tod und das Mädchen*); he could be complex (*Der Erlkönig*), and as simple as a folk tune (*Heidenröslein*); he could sing of love with the sentimentality of a schoolboy (*Serenade*), and with the sophistication of one who realizes that there is pain as well as joy in love (*Frühlingstraum*); he could achieve a lyricism in all its purity (*Hark, Hark, the Lark and Who is Sylvia?*), and a dramatic line that is more declamation than song (*Der Doppelgänger*). He has repose (*Du bist die Ruh*), and febrile unrest (*Ungeduld*). . . . And one could go on thus through Schubert's five hundred songs.

Because he had created a new art form, Schubert's songs were met with general indifference or misunderstanding. Singers would not perform them because they were not sufficiently "melodious"—of all things!—in the way that Haydn and Mozart were melodious. Publishers would not print them because the accompaniments were too difficult and thus the songs would find few buyers.

But history has rudely passed by some of those who were acclaimed in Schubert's time, and has selected for immortality the ignored Schubert. Everyone who followed him and wrote songs was influenced by him. Others were destined to write great songs—Schumann, Brahms, Hugo Wolf; none ever sur-

passed his infinite variety, his natural genius for expressing every mood and emotion. And none played so powerful a role in the history of the song-form.

Recommended recordings: *An die Musik*, V-1932 (E. Schumann); *Auf dem Wasser zu Singen*, V-1932 (E. Schumann); *Ave Maria*, V-15752 (Maynor); *Du Bist die Ruh*, V-14077 (E. Schumann); *Der Erlkönig*, V-15825 (Kipnis); *Die Forelle*, V-1862 (Anderson); *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, V-1856 (Lehmann); *Hark, Hark, the Lark*, V-1933 (E. Schumann); *Heidenröslein*, V-14077 (E. Schumann); *Im Abendroth*, V-1731 (Lehmann); *Der Musensohn*, V-1935 (E. Schumann); *Der Tod und das Mädchen*, V-1862 (Anderson); *Der Wanderer*, V-15891 (Tibbett); *Who Is Sylvia?* V-12725 (Bjoerling); *Wiegenlied*, V-1856 (Lehmann).

## SONG CYCLES

"What Schubert calls a song cycle," wrote F. Max Müller, "becomes a perfected tragic opera. . . . The melody flows from his soul with a fulness that never fails, the harmonies range from gentle simplicity to the utmost symphonic power, and never, in all probability, has so rich a dramatic effect been achieved with such slight means as in the *Schöne Müllerin* and *Die Winterreise* songs."

### *Die Schöne Müllerin*

Schubert composed his song-cycle *Die Schöne Müllerin*, Op. 25, to verses by Rückert in 1823. Here he reached back to the song forms and feelings of his earlier days. "He who had explored philosophies and passions in the company of Goethe and the rest," wrote Richard Capell of this cycle, "could still turn back to the simple things with the candid gaze of his boyhood."

E. S. Porter has provided an admirable program for the entire cycle by incorporating into his explanation the titles of the twenty different songs: "The cycle presents to us in charming little poems the story of hope, love, and tragedy. The young miller, his apprenticeship finished, rejoices in the prospect of *Wandering* (*Das Wandern*). He comes to a lively brook which must certainly answer his question *Whither?* (*Wohin?*). It leads him to a *Halt* (*Halt!*) by a charming mill where is a lovely maid, and he *Thanks the Brook* (*Danksagung an den Bach*) for its kindness. *The Evening's Rest* (*Am Feierabend*) brings joy—the miller and the daughter are kind, but the young miller wishes to do mighty deeds, to prove his worth. He *Enquires* (*Der Neugierige*) of the brook if she loves him: let it answer yes or no: but he gets no satisfaction. He is *Impatient* (*Ungeduld*), for his love is overpowering. He sings a *Morning's Greeting* (*Morgengruss*) under her window, and gathers *Flowers* (*Des Müllers Blumen*) for her from the brook. She accompanies him to the brook, but a *Shower* (*Thränenregen*) drives her home. 'She is *Mine* (*Mein!*),' he rejoices, but such happiness makes him *Pause* (*Pause*). His lute on the wall seems to sigh—shall he become more happy still or less? The *Green Lute Band* (*Mit dem grünen Lautenbande*) he removes and binds in her hair for it is the color of their love. But it is also the color of the *Hunter* (*Die Jäger*) who now comes on the scene. The lover goes to the turbulent brook for its

assistance. It must scold the maid but say no word for his grief—it must say he is playing merrily on his pipes for he is *Jealous but Proud* (*Eifersucht und Stolz*). He must wear the *Beloved Color* (*Die liebe Farbe*) and become a hunter—but for death. He would travel far, but the *Hated Color* (*Die böse Farbe*) green is everywhere in field and forest. He must say farewell and bid her remove the ribbon from her hair. The flowers she gave him are *Withered* (*Trock'ne Blumen*), they shall be in his grave. For the last time he visits his old friend *The Brook* (*Der Müller und der Bach*) whose sympathy is of no avail, but it sings a gentle *Lullaby* (*Des Baches Wiegenlied*) as he rests forever below its cool waters."

Recommended recording: CM-317 (Wolff).

### *Schwanengesang*

Strictly speaking the *Schwanengesang* is not an integrated song-cycle, because it is not built exclusively from the lyrics of one poet. The first seven songs are by Rellstab, the next six by Heine, and the fourteenth is by Seidl. It was composed in 1828—Schubert's last year, and thus is literally his swan-song in lyric form.

In these songs, wrote Porter, "beauty and emotional force are truly balanced to perfection, and their chief technical attribute is a wonderful simplicity that marks the work of great artists. . . . Economy of material and methods is the hallmark of these songs, whether it be in the lyrical form of such as the first and the last in the book; in the pathetic monologues of those like '*Ihr Bild*' and '*Am Meer*'; in the great emotional outbursts of '*Der Atlas*' and '*Der Doppelgänger*'; or in the realism of '*Der Stadt*.'"

The *Schwanengesang* comprises the following songs: I. "*Liebesbotschaft*"; II. "*Kriegers Ahnung*"; III. "*Frühlingssehnsucht*"; IV. "*Ständchen*"; V. "*Aufenthalt*"; VI. "*In der Ferne*"; VII. "*Abschied*"; VIII. "*Der Atlas*"; IX. "*Ihr Bild*"; X. "*Das Fischermädchen*"; XI. "*Die Stadt*"; XII. "*Am Meer*"; XIII. "*Der Doppelgänger*"; XIV. "*Die Taubenpost*."

Recommended recordings: "*Ständchen*," V-12725 (Bjoerling); "*Aufenthalt*," V-14210 (Anderson); "*Am Meer*," V-7473 (Schorr); "*Der Doppelgänger*," C-67434 (Kipnis).

### *Die Winterreise*

Perhaps nothing gloomier exists in song literature than the cycle of twenty-four songs which Schubert composed to lyrics by Wilhelm Müller, Op. 89. Schubert's friend Spaun has recorded how Schubert first played these songs for his intimate circle, soon after he had composed them in 1827. "'Come to Schober's today,' said Schubert, 'and I will play you a cycle of terrifying songs; they have affected me more than has ever been the case with any other songs.' He then with a voice full of feeling sang the entire *Winterreise* for us. We were altogether dumbfounded by the somber mood of these songs, and Schober said that one song only, '*Der Lindenbaum*', had pleased him. There-

upon Schubert leaped up and replied, "These songs please me more than all the rest, and in time they will please you as well." And he was right; we were soon enthusiastic over these sorrowful melodies."

As Dahms said, these songs stand alone "in stark grandeur." There is nothing quite like them in song-writing. "The overwhelming grief," wrote Edgar Istel, "of the hero of this Winter Journey to this day grips us with incomparable power, quite contrary to the pretty love-sorrows in the previous cycle, whose griefs now impress us as being somewhat negligible. In *Der Winterreise*, the poet discovers cosmic interconnections, tremendous metaphysical vistas to which Schubert's genius first lends power in adequate tones. Positively overpowering to begin with is the manner in which Schubert in the very first song, *Gute Nacht*, established the fundamental mood."

*Die Winterreise* includes the following songs: I. "*Gute Nacht*"; II. "*Die Wetterfahne*"; III. "*Gefror'ne Tränen*"; IV. "*Erstarrung*"; V. "*Der Lindenbaum*"; VI. "*Wasserfluth*"; VII. "*Auf dem Flusse*"; VIII. "*Rückblicke*"; IX. "*Irrlicht*"; X. "*Rast*"; XI. "*Frühlingstraum*"; XII. "*Einsamkeit*"; XIII. "*Die Post*"; XIV. "*Der greise Kopf*"; XV. "*Die Krähe*"; XVI. "*Letzte Hoffnung*"; XVII. "*Im Dorfe*"; XVIII. "*Der stürmische Morgen*"; XIX. "*Täuschung*"; XX. "*Der Wegweiser*"; XXI. "*Das Wirtshaus*"; XXII. "*Muth*"; XXIII. "*Die Nebensonnen*"; XXIV. "*Der Leiermann*."

Recommended recordings: A Selection of Eleven Songs, VM-692 (Lehmann); Vol. I and II, CM-466. 587 (Lehmann).

## SYMPHONIES

While the early symphonies of Schubert are not without their charm—their greatest appeal lies in their fresh and enchanting lyricism—they are derivative from Mozart and structurally immature. As Albert Roussel wrote of them: "The themes are not very clear, the rhythm is less marked than with Beethoven. . . . One must attribute a certain prolixity to the composer's inexperience."

Yet, as a symphonist, his importance does not rest exclusively on the famous *Unfinished* and the grandiose C major. The Fourth (*Tragic*) and the Fifth are impressive achievements, the essence of Schubert in their freshness, vitality, and inspiration.

### *Symphony No. 4 in C minor ("Tragic")*

The Fourth Symphony was composed in 1816—Schubert's nineteenth year. "Here for the first time is the *real* Schubert, the incomparable melodist, though in a gloomier vein than usual," wrote Eugene Goossens. "The composer himself affixed the title 'Tragic'—one wonders why. The introduction is sombre and stern, the allegro menacing. Typically Schubertian is the lovely Andante and the minuet is unusually chromatic. The final Allegro carries through to the end a restless and, for Schubert, a rather turgid note, which

enhances all the more the contrast between this symphony and its successor, the B-flat major."

Recommended recording: VM-562 (New York Philharmonic—Barbirolli).

### *Symphony No. 5 in B-flat major*

This work is usually known as the "Symphony without trumpets and drums." Schubert composed this work for an amateur orchestral group which used to meet at the home of Otto Hatwig, and the probable reason for the omission of drums and trumpets from the work is that there were none in this unprofessional group. Schubert composed this symphony in 1816 (the same year as the Fourth).

"None of the early symphonies is so consistently, even magically inspired in its entirety," wrote R. H. Hull. "For one, Schubert dispenses with any real introduction as such: four bars suffice to bring in the first subject of the first movement. Throughout the symphony there is not a dark thought to cloud the exquisite sunniness of its pages. Whether we turn to the vivacious first movement; the captivating meditations of the Andante con moto; the sturdy Menuetto with its lyrical and unforgettable Trio; or to the spirited Allegro, which provides such a happy finish, the composer's mood is one of exalted cheerfulness."

Recommended recording: CM-366 (London Philharmonic—Beecham).

### *Symphony in B minor ("Unfinished")*

Schubert's Eighth (and most famous) Symphony is called the "Unfinished" because it contains only two instead of the traditional three or four movements of the classical symphony.

In 1822, Schubert was elected an honorary member of the musical club of Linz and Graz in Austria. To make that election official, he was required to submit one of his works. He decided upon a symphony which he had begun some time earlier, and since he had only two movements ready he submitted these.

At Graz, the manuscript fell into the hands of Anselm Hüttenbrenner, a close friend of Schubert; precisely how he acquired it from the musical club has never been explained. For many years, the symphony rested untouched in Hüttenbrenner's private collection, its existence known only to a handful of Schubert's closest friends. In 1860 Josef Hüttenbrenner, Anselm's brother, wrote to Johann Herbeck, conductor of the concerts of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna, telling of the existence of the symphony in his brother's collection, and urging a performance. He referred to the symphony as a "treasure . . . which we consider equal to the great Symphony in C, his instrumental swan-song, and to any by Beethoven. Only it is not finished."

Johann Herbeck did not follow Hüttenbrenner's advice until 1865. At that time, visiting Graz, he stopped at Anselm Hüttenbrenner's home and

glanced over the manuscript collection. As he turned the half-crumbling, yellow pages of Schubert's symphony they almost disintegrated in his hands. And so—on December 17, 1865 (thirty-seven years after Schubert's death)—the Symphony in B minor was introduced to the music world at a concert of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Herbeck conducting.

Why Schubert permitted the symphony to remain unfinished is one of the unanswerable enigmas of musical history. The layman is frequently tempted to believe that death prevented its completion; but Schubert lived almost six years after he wrote the *Unfinished*, and composed one more symphony, the monumental C major.

The fact that there exist several sketches of the proposed Scherzo as a third movement for the symphony, terminating after only a few bars, suggests that Schubert soon realized that even he—who was never at a loss for inspiration—was incapable of producing two additional movements maintaining the exquisite perfection, the ineffable charm, the idyllic mood of the first two sections. It seems that Schubert, rather than compose music incapable of sustaining the loveliness and poetry of his original conception, decided to leave the symphony unfinished—as perfect in its incomplete state as, for example, the Venus de Milo, to which it has so frequently been compared.

During the centenary celebration of Schubert's death, in 1928, the Columbia Phonograph Company decided to sponsor a contest among composers for two movements most suitable to complete the *Unfinished* Symphony. Immediately there arose a thunder of protest from leading musicians everywhere who felt that any attempt by a living composer to complete the *Unfinished* Symphony was a desecration. The Columbia Phonograph Company therefore changed the rules of its contest and asked, instead, for a work in the spirit of Schubert and as a tribute to the master. The prize went to a Symphony composed by Kurt Atterberg.

Recommended recording: VM-1039 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

### *Symphony No. 7 in C major*

Schubert's last symphony is sometimes called his Seventh, and sometimes his Ninth. It is the Ninth in order of composition, but the Seventh in order of publication.

The C major Symphony was a product of Schubert's last year (1828). It was a year of fabulous production, almost as if Schubert sensed that he had not much longer to live and that he must write in a feverish burst of activity if he was to write all the music that was in him. In 1828, he wrote—besides the C major Symphony—the song cycle *Schwanengesang*, the C major String Quintet, an oratorio, a Mass, and songs.

Schubert submitted the symphony to the Musikverein of Vienna, which tried it out in rehearsal and then refused to play it because it was too difficult. Its first performance was given by the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (also of Vienna) on December 15, 1828—a month after Schubert's death. Then it



was forgotten. About ten years later, Robert Schumann—on a visit to Vienna—came upon the symphony in a bundle of Schubert manuscripts in the possession of Schubert's brother Ferdinand. He despatched a copy of it to Felix Mendelssohn, who performed the symphony at a concert of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra on March 21, 1839. "If only you could have been there!" wrote Schumann to his beloved Clara. "All the instruments are human voices, and unbelievably expressive. And the heavenly length! . . . longer than the Ninth Symphony. I was completely happy, and wished only that you were my wife and that I could write such symphonies!"

The C major, Schubert's only symphony cast in an epic form, proves how rapidly he was growing as a creative artist and how far he would have traveled as a symphonist had he lived. It has lyric enchantment, of course; but many things besides: power, strength, individuality—and sublimity. "The powerful rhythm, the strong accents, the sonority of the moving parts, the charm of the melodic phrases and that delightful little marching movement in the Andante—everything concurs in the Symphony to convey to us the impression of overwhelming vitality, of a joyous and exuberant temperament," wrote Albert Roussel. "It is like a well of energy in the midst of a shadow, which was encompassing him, a last goodbye to this fairy world of sound, where Nature had made him King and from whence he was about to be exiled. He died to the final chords of the Symphony, which ends, as it were, regretfully; but he died in glory crowned."

The magic moments of this symphony are many and unforgettable. Philip Hale has singled them out: "The Hungarian dash in the second theme of the first movement; the wonderful trombone passage; the melodic charm of the Andante and the infinite beauty of the detail . . . ; the expressive trio of the Scherzo; the rush of the finale—these place the symphony high on the list."

Recommended recording: VM-602 (London Symphony—Walter).

## TRIOS

### *Trio in B-flat*

### *Trio in E-flat*

Schubert composed his two great Piano Trios (Opp. 99 and 100) in the winter of 1827.

Laciár's analysis of the two trios follows: "The first movement [of the B-flat major] is full of vigor and life, and the second contains one of Schubert's most inspired melodies. The Minuet is an attractive movement but does not show the individuality of the Finale, which is a rondo with a vast amount of beautiful musical material and with an astonishing figure in 3-2 time which occurs twice, each a variant of musical material previously presented.

"The second trio [E-flat], like the first, begins with a rhythmic and vigorous unison, and there is a characteristic accompaniment figure which reap-

pears in the last movement—one of the few times Schubert used this device. The first movement is very long, with many changes of tonality and signature but can scarcely be considered the equal of the corresponding movement of the earlier trios. The *Andante con moto*, however, is one of Schubert's most beautiful slow movements. It is a funeral march (although not so named) with a despairing melody in the violoncello and a march-like accompaniment in the piano. In the middle movement is another of those passages of agitation. . . . The *Scherzo* . . . is a delightful movement based on a canon between the piano and the strings in octaves. . . . The last movement as usual is far the longest of the trio, and while containing many ideas of great beauty, is undeniably weakened by length. The principal subject of the slow movement is twice introduced here, once intact, and the second time considerably modified."

Recommended recordings: B-flat, VM-429 (Schnabel; Onnou; Maas); E-flat, VM-374 (Busch-Serkin Trio).

## SCHÜTZ

HEINRICH SCHÜTZ, b. Köstritz, Saxony, 1585. He became a chorister in the chapel of the Landgraf Maurice of Hesse-Cassel, subsequently studying under Giovanni Gabrieli in Italy. Here Schütz published his first volume of songs (1611). In 1614, he went to Dresden as Kapellmeister to the Elector of Saxony. In this post, he remained fifty-seven years, except for a few visits to Italy and Denmark. His first important works as a composer were produced in 1619; and thereafter, until the end of his life, he was prolific. He died in Dresden in 1672.

HEINRICH SCHÜTZ is sometimes described as the father of German music. He composed what is believed to be the first German opera: *Dafne* (1627), and was the first great composer of German homophonic music. "When he was born," wrote Erckmann, "the purely polyphonic style had undergone a change. While studying under Gabrieli he encountered the 'nuove musiche'—solo songs with figured bass, the development of instrumental music, and the union of vocal and instrumental music. With this new style he became thoroughly acquainted during a second stay in Italy, and he was the first German who introduced into Germany the musical methods and manner of Italy."

Schütz's most important contributions were to the field of the oratorio: it was he who brought the oratorio form to that stage of development from which it was to be carried on and enriched by the genius of Bach and Handel. He thus represents the transition from the comparatively primitive oratorio of Carissimi to the glorious art of Handel and Bach.

## CHORAL MUSIC

The complete works of Schütz were published by Breitkopf & Härtel under the editorship of Philipp Spitta. This library of choral music includes Passions (Schütz, like Bach, composed Passions According to St. John and St. Matthew), Oratorios, Psalms, Requiems, Motets, Madrigals, etc.

According to Cecil Gray, the most striking characteristic of Schütz's music "lies in its expressive depth. In the art of Schütz every means of securing musical interest is ruthlessly sacrificed to his expressive purpose, with the result that he attains to a stark, elemental simplicity and a mystical grandeur and solemnity that are quite unlike anything else, and are among the most affecting things in all music. . . . It is incidentally interesting to note that Schütz became deaf in his old age, and that it is, therefore, probably no mere coincidence that we should encounter in his later work the same mysterious inner radiance, the same abstract and disembodied quality of thought, the same notes of wistful and tender resignation that we find in the later work of Beethoven."

# SCHUMAN

WILLIAM SCHUMAN, b. New York City, 1910. Pursued his academic studies at Columbia University, and his music training with Max Persin, Roy Harris, and Charles Haubiel, as well as at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. In 1935 he joined the music faculty of Sarah Lawrence College, at the same time beginning his career as a composer. He has been outstandingly successful almost from the first. In 1939, he won the Guggenheim Award, and was the first recipient of an Award in Composition established by Town Hall and the League of Composers. His Third Symphony was selected by the Music Critics Circle as the most important new work of the year (1942), and in 1943 he won the Pulitzer Prize.

SCHUMAN's best works reveal that completeness of expression which can come only after a composer has found himself. There is a directness that is arresting, a sincerity and high-mindedness that speak in every bar. On the surface he reminds one of Roy Harris, particularly in the profusion of his thematic material and in his predilection for contrapuntal devices. But Schuman is no carbon copy; he is a personality in his own right. He is warmer and more human than Harris. His music has greater intensity and passion. He prefers expansive structures, but—because he has a splendid technique with which to build his wealth of material into well-knit designs—there is no diffuseness. Beyond this, he has imagination, taste, sensitively controlled emotions, and occasionally (as in *Newsreel*) an engaging humor.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

*American Festival Overture*

Schuman composed this pleasing overture in the summer of 1939, and it was introduced by the Boston Symphony Orchestra on October 6 of that year. The composer provided his own explanation and analysis of the score: "The first three notes of this piece will be recognized by some listeners as the 'call to play' of boyhood days. In New York City, it is yelled on the syllables 'Wee-Awk-Ee' to get the gang together for a game or a festive occasion of some sort. This call very naturally suggested itself for a piece of music being composed for a very festive occasion. From this it should not be inferred that the overture is program music. In fact, the idea for the music came to mind before the origin of the theme was recalled. The development of this bit of folk material, then, is along purely musical lines.

"The first section of the work is concerned with the musical material discussed above and the ideas growing out of it. The music leads to a transition section and the subsequent announcement of a Fugue subject. The entire middle section is given over to that Fugue. . . . The climax leads to the final section of the work, which consists of opening materials paraphrased and the introduction of new subsidiary themes. The tempo of the work is fast."

Recommended recording: V-18511 (National Symphony—Kindler).

## SYMPHONY

*Symphony No. 3*

It was with the Third Symphony that Schuman established his reputation as one of the major voices among the younger American composers. It was composed in January 1941, and was a sensation when it was introduced by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Koussevitzky on October 17, 1941. In the spring of 1942, the Music Critics Circle voted it the most important new work of the year.

It is in two sections: I. Passacaglia and Fugue; II. Chorale and Toccata. The style of the work is contrapuntal, many different strands being woven together with the utmost ingenuity and inventiveness. Although this contrapuntal style, with the use of such old forms as Passacaglia, Fugue, Chorale and Toccata, suggests the distant past, the music is intensely modern in its energy, its dynamic power, and its restless spirit.

As Olin Downes pointed out in reviewing this work, there is here not only excellent counterpoint but also "vistas of harmonic and linear beauty. . . . And there's laughter, too."

# SCHUMANN

ROBERT SCHUMANN, b. Zwickau, Germany, 1810. He was first intended for the law, but while at the Heidelberg University he decided definitely to turn to music. In 1830, he went to Leipzig, there to devote himself to intensive music study and to his first compositions, *Papillons* and *Variations on Abegg*. In 1833, he helped to found the *Dauidsündler*, a society of iconoclastic and idealistic young men determined to break down false standards and ideals in music; the voice for this group was the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, edited by Schumann. In 1835, began Schumann's tempestuous love affair for Clara Wieck which continued for several years, despite every effort of Father Wieck to break it up, and which culminated with marriage in 1840. After 1840 came Schumann's greatest creative period, inspired in part by his happiness with his wife. But by 1850, the nervous disorders from which he had been suffering for a long time, grew more severe, and by 1854 he was trying to commit suicide. He went insane, and died in an asylum in Endenick in 1856.

**I**t is habitual to speak of many of the great Romantic composers as poets of music, but few deserve this sobriquet so well as Schumann. Whatever he wrote was deeply poetic, rich with imagination, feeling, tenderness, and fancy. His gamut was wide: he could be not only lyric, but dramatic and epic as well. Gentleness and tranquillity are sometimes found in his slow movements. But, at other moments, he could be passionate, intense, febrile, cogent. Only Brahms surpassed his capacity to suggest many different moods and to express widely ranging emotions.

In the smaller forms he was the consummate master, both in technique and in materials. (In this connection it must be remembered that many of his large works for solo piano are compilations of a number of small pieces). These small pieces are filled with wondrous fancies, poetic and ironic, nostalgic and heroic. He was greatest in these cameos, particularly when he wrote for the piano or for the voice, in which two fields he need give way to no one.

But his creative gifts were powerful enough to carry him through territory in which he was, perhaps, less at ease: the symphony, the string quartet, the concerto. His was a flexible technique which enabled him to move with comparative ease in larger forms. He had the gift of development, of building up his germinal materials into impressive structures. He could write expansively without being prolix.

In one respect—and this reveals further his wide span—he was unique. As W. H. Hadow pointed out: "There is no other instance of a musician who applies himself successively to each department of his art, masters it, and passes on to the next. Almost all [Schumann's] piano works were written before 1840, then came a year of song writing, then a year of symphony, then a year of chamber music. . . . Schumann employs every medium in turn; but he fetches it from outside, and puts it back when he has finished with it."

## CONCERTOS

## 'Cello Concerto

*Concerto in A minor*

Schumann wrote his concerto for 'cello and orchestra, Op. 129, in 1850. It was introduced on June 9, 1860—four years after the composer's death—by the Royal Conservatory Orchestra of Leipzig with Ludwig Ebert as soloist. Clara described "the romantic quality, the flight, the freshness, and the humor" of this work, and her description still holds true. "The highly ingenious interweaving of 'cello and orchestra is, indeed, wholly ravishing, and what euphony and deep sentiment are in all the melodic passages!" The concerto is in three movements: *Nicht zu schnell*; *Langsam*; and *Sehr lebhaft*. The slow movement has some beautiful lyric writing for the solo instrument.

Recommended recording: VM-247 (Piatigorsky; London Philharmonic—Barbirolli).

## Piano Concerto

*Concerto in A minor*

"In the sphere of the concerto Schumann has left an imperishable trace of his genius in the Piano Concerto in A minor (Op. 54)," wrote Philipp Spitta. "It is one of his most beautiful and mature works. In addition to all his peculiar originality it has also the qualities, which no concerto should lack, of external brilliance, and striking, powerful, well-rounded subjects. The first movement is written in a free form with happy effect; the cause being that Schumann had at first intended it to stand as an independent piece, with the title 'Fantasia.' He did not add the other two movements until two years afterwards." The second and third movements—*Intermezzo* and *Allegro vivace*—maintain the happy inspiration of the first. "In the light, graceful *intermezzo*," wrote Hadow, "the second subject is ingeniously developed out of a phrase in the first, and the stirring finale is in Schumann's best style of composition."

The Concerto was completed in 1845, and was introduced that same year in Dresden by Clara Schumann. It was unsuccessful, and it remained unsuccessful for many years. When the Concerto was performed in London in 1856 by Clara, one leading critic there praised her "praiseworthy efforts . . . to make her husband's curious rhapsody pass for music."

Recommended recording: VM-473 (Hess; Symphony Orchestra—Goehr).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

*Manfred Overture*

The *Manfred Overture*, Op. 114, is part of the incidental music that Schumann composed in 1848 for Byron's drama. It was introduced at a Gewandhaus concert in Leipzig on March 14, 1852 under the direction of the composer.

Louis Ehlert wrote of this work as follows: "The *Manfred Overture* springs

wholly from an attempt to acquire the psychologic development without any decorative accessories. Even the three syncopated opening chords remind us of the crime whose oppressive weight hangs over Manfred, and how plainly we see the battle begin in the slow movement! . . . Manfred's wild, impetuous struggle for freedom, in the syncopated violin motives; the obstinate resistance of the dark spirits, and Manfred's guilt, in powerful chords; Astarte's image as the mild consoler in the sweeter motive! How passionately the battle rages in the Allegro, Astarte being more and more clearly revealed as its central point, in the second motive. . . . Then this gradually becomes less agonizing as the flame of battle turns up more hotly than before, while that inflexible chord of the three trumpets seems to be harmoniously and melodiously resolved; and Manfred's death at the close seems to be his liberation and redemption."

Recommended recording: V-11713-4 (B.B.C. Symphony—Boult).

## PIANO MUSIC

The beauty of Schumann's piano music does not lie on the surface to be recognized at a casual glance. It is subtle, elusive, and complex. As J. A. Fuller-Maitland pointed out, Schumann preferred suggestion to outright statement. "Subtleties of various kinds are employed to veil the melodic outlines." Philip Hale had the same idea: "Schumann's music is an expression of states and conditions of the soul. The music is never spectacular; it is never objective. . . . No composer has whispered such secrets of subtle and ravishing beauty to a receptive listener. The hearer of Schumann's music must in turn be imaginative and a dreamer. He must often anticipate the composer's thought."

For his larger piano works Schumann created a musical form which is his own. It consists of a series of brief, connected pieces integrated by a central poetic idea and combined into a large and complex whole. In this form he wrote his greatest piano works, such as *Carnival*, *Etudes symphoniques*, *Fantasiestücke*, and *Kreisleriana*.

### *Carnival*

The *Carnival*, Op. 9, composed in 1834-5, is the kind of musical joke Schumann often liked to perpetrate in his piano music. He subtitled it "Little Scenes in Four Notes." The four notes are A, E, C, B. Since, in German, the note E flat is called "Es" and B is "H," the four letters spell "Asch"—a small town in Bohemia. Asch was the home of Ernestine von Fricken, with whom Schumann was then (briefly) in love, and he wrote the music in her honor.

*Carnival* is a playful, frequently witty, sometimes nostalgic picture of a colorful carnival. It comprises many smaller pieces blended together in one coherent composition. It opens with a *Préambule*, in which the festive mood of the Carnival, the revelry of a Mardi Gras, are depicted. We then see a portrait of *Pierrot* and *Arlequin*, the clowns that have long been favorites in

European masquerades. After a sentimental *Valse noble*, Schumann gives us two self-portraits: The first he calls *Eusebius* (after one of his pen-names in his *Zeitschrift für Musik*), pointing to his dreamy, poetic nature; the second, called by another of his pen-names, *Florestan*, reveals the more fiery and energetic Schumann, the fighter for ideals. *Coquette* is a fanciful, captivating study of a flirtatious girl, whose advances are answered in *Replique*. *Sphinxes* poses a musical riddle: within the texture of the music are concealed notes that spell out the name Asch. *Papillons* is a delicate depiction of butterflies in motion. In *Chiarina* (inspired by Clara Wieck) Schumann uses a rhythm to suggest the name. *Chopin* (in imitation of a Chopin nocturne) is a tribute to the great composer whom Schumann was the first to publicize to the world. *Estrella* is a portrait of Ernestine von Fricken. *Reconnaissance* describes the joy with which old friends meet again. *Pantolon et Colombine* are portrayals of two familiar figures in Italian comedies. *Valse allemande* is followed by a virtuoso passage aptly called *Paganini*. *Aveu*, *Promenade*, and *Pause* pass from sentimentality to tranquillity. And then the entire work ends on a martial note in *Marche des "Davidsbündler" contre les Philistins*: a stately theme speaks for the champions of true art and ideals (the young men, headed by Schumann, who edited the *Zeitschrift*), while a pert little waltz subject characterizes the Philistines.

Recommended recording: VM-476 (Hess).

### *Etudes symphoniques*

The year 1833, Schumann's twenty-third, was turbulent for the composer. For the first time he betrayed symptoms of what was later to become a chronic and fatal malady: In a temporary fit of insanity, brought on by melancholia, he tried to throw himself out of the fourth-floor window of his house. Within a few months, however, the mental depression passed, Schumann having by now found new strength drawn from his inner creative force. In 1834, he wrote the first of his masterpieces, the *Etudes symphoniques*, Op. 13, and with his creative imagination aflame his will-to-live was reborn.

The *Etudes symphoniques*, a set of twelve variations on a lyric theme, was coldly received by concert audiences for almost fifty years; then, with Anton Rubinstein's playing of it, due recognition came at last. This long neglect is not hard to understand. In writing variations, Schumann rarely clings to the outline of the original melody. Instead, an accompanying bass motive, a rhythmic or harmonic suggestion of the theme, inspire in him new melodic flights in which the original idea is only faintly (often unrecognizably) suggested. Thus, in the *Etudes symphoniques*, the original theme is now and again so subtly concealed within the elaborate texture of the variations that only an intimate acquaintance with the music can discover the relationship between theme and variations.

But with what an enrichment of material do the variations unfold! Tracing a wide gamut of emotions, atmospheres, and suggestions, the variations are, at



different moments, lyric, poignant, dramatic, romantic, and majestic. The entire work ends on a note of regal pomp. In this finale Schumann quotes briefly a melodic fragment by the operetta composer Heinrich Marschner, to please Marschner's admirer, William Sterndale Bennett, to whom the work is dedicated.

Recommended recording: CM-X162 (Kilenyi).

### *Fantasy in C major*

In 1835, plans were formulated to build a monument in honor of Beethoven at his birthplace in Bonn, and for this purpose funds were raised throughout Germany. Schumann, too, wished to make his contribution, and he composed his monumental *Fantasy in C major*, Op. 17, with the intention that all profits from its publication be turned over to the fund. Originally, Schumann intended to call the work *Obolus* (after the ancient Greek coin), and to subtitle the three movements: "Ruins," "Triumphal Arch," and "Starry Crown." The project for the Beethoven monument fell through (it was not to be built for another decade); but Schumann's masterpiece remains, one of his greatest works for the piano.

"I have just finished a Fantasy in three movements," wrote Robert to Clara Wieck (his future wife) in 1838, "which I sketched down to its details in June 1836. I do not think I ever wrote anything more impassioned than the first movement. It is a profound lament about you. You can understand the Fantasy only if you transport yourself back to the unhappy summer of 1836, when I had to give you up. Now I have no reason to compose in so miserable and melancholy a way!"

The work, dedicated to Franz Liszt, was inspired by a motto from Schlegel which appears in the published score: "There is one gentle note for the secret listener through all the tones that sound in earth's fitful dream." It is in three movements. The first (*Il tutto fantastico ed appassionato*) is turbulent; a passionate yearning sounds through these pages. The second (*Moderato con energia*) is a march of triumph in the form of a Rondo. The last movement (*Lento sostenuto; un poco piu mosso*) is a slow movement of eloquent and moving lyricism.

"The first number . . . may be divided into three sections," wrote Frederick Niecks. "The whirring and whirling figure with which the section opens transports us at once into the mood where we forget the present moment . . . and abandon ourselves to nobler and better thoughts. . . . Above this eddying sea of sound soars a melody of peculiar beauty. . . . The *Moderato con energia* is a kind of triumphal march, grand and powerful. . . . And the third portion of the *Fantasia*! Who could trace with pen or brush the fine and delicate nuances of the pure stream of beatific melody which flows through this meditation?"

Recommended recording: VM-463 (Bachaus).

### *Fantasiestücke*

The *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, comprises eight small pieces, and was composed in 1837. "*Des Abends* is a charming picture of evening tranquillity, and *Aufschwung*, with its buoyant rhythm, gives us the energy of soaring aspiration," wrote Fuller-Maitland. "We need not ask what the question of *Warum* may be, but never was question asked more eloquently. *Grillen* is sufficiently whimsical, and in *In der Nacht* we have a faithful representation of a restless night with a short sleep in the middle of it, a sleep not quite disturbed. . . . Whether *Farbel* is a chequered dream we cannot tell, but *Traumeswirren* certainly is, and is one of the most beautiful of the series. In *Ende vom Lied* we seem to be back with Eusebius and Florestan once more, and its solemn ending forms a noble close to the whole."

Recommended recording: VM-379 (Bauer).

### *Kreisleriana*

The source for Schumann's inspiration for *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16, was, of course, the fantastic sketches of E. T. A. Hoffmann. "In calling his pieces *Kreisleriana*," explained W. H. Hadow, "Schumann is expressing a real connection of thought, a real recognition of alliance. They are, in fact, *Fantasiestücke* in Hoffmann's manner."

The *Kreisleriana* is composed of eight pieces, all of them in da capo form. Though each work is effective separately, they have a subtle connection with one another, and can best be appreciated and understood when played successively.

"In no other of his pianoforte works is the expression of emotion so clear and so intelligible," wrote Hadow. "The voice is eloquent even though we cannot catch the precise words of its utterance. Here also is no attempt to depict any specific scene or occurrence; the music is suggestive, not descriptive; the end is attained purely and simply by the indication of broad general types of feeling. . . . The most determinate effects of tone produce in the hearer a mental impression analogous to that caused by the least determinate effects of word."

Recommended recording: VM-493 (Cortot).

### *Toccata*

The *Toccata*, Op. 7, is one of Schumann's most brilliant virtuoso pieces for the piano. He began composing it in 1829, as a "big exercise in double notes," and kept working at it, on and off, for five years, until it reached a shape that satisfied him. The *Toccata* is a romanticist's conception of a form favored by the classical organ composer; in Schumann's hand it becomes the vehicle for breath-taking bravura writing. A brief melodic figure is the germ of the entire work. It is developed in thirds, sixths, and broken chords in a powerful and cogent drive in which the motion never flags or relents.

Recommended recording: V-14263 (Barere).

## QUARTETS

## Piano Quartet

*Quartet in E-flat*

Schumann's Piano Quartet in E-flat, Op. 47, is one of his chamber-music masterpieces, deserving to rank with his great Piano Quintet. In comparing these two works, J. A. Fuller-Maitland expresses the belief that the Piano Quartet is by no means inferior to the more famous Quintet. "The first movement is as vigorous, and the last as bright, as the corresponding portions of the Quintet, and the romantic element is quite as strong in the gloomy Scherzo and in the passionate Andante, with its bitter-sweet suspensions. . . . The Scherzo of the Quartet, like that of the Quintet, has two trios. . . . The somber coloring of this movement may perhaps partly account for the difference in popularity between these two works, the greatest of Schumann's chamber compositions."

## String Quartets

*Quartet in A major*

In the spring of 1842, Schumann turned to the writing of string quartets, preparing himself for this assignment by immersing himself in the study of the quartets of Haydn and Mozart. He wrote a set of three works grouped in Op. 41: A minor; F major; and A major. The three quartets were first performed at the home of Ferdinand David, the famous violinist. "His first, which pleased me greatly, indeed, made me marvel at his talent," wrote Hauptmann. "Here, too, there is no lack of the unusual in content and form. It is cleverly conceived and held together, and a great deal of it is lovely."

Though Schumann thought highly of his quartets, they are not by any means his greatest works. His tendency to think in terms of the piano made it difficult for him to arrive at the transparency and refinement required in string-writing. Yet they have many moments of great beauty, moments rich with poetic thought and deep feeling, and for these reasons make rewarding hearing.

The most original of the three quartets, and artistically the most significant, is the third of the set, in A major, which Schumann composed within a few days. In this work he utilizes a unique technical method: a distinct device in the use of intervals characterizes each of the four movements. The first movement is dominated by the use of fifths and fourths; the interval of the fourth is prominent in the second movement, while the seventh also appears to advantage in the third movement; in the finale, the main theme consists of scale passages interrupted by a falling sixth.

Recommended recording: CM-319 (Lener Quartet).

## QUINTET

*Piano Quintet in E-flat*

As Philipp Spitta wrote, Schumann's great Piano Quintet, Op. 44, "will always keep its place in the first rank of musical masterpieces. It claims the highest admiration not only because of the brilliant originality, and its innate power—which seems to grow with every movement, and at the end of the whole leaves the hearer with a feeling of the possibility of never-ending increase—but also because of its gorgeous beauty of sound, and the beautiful and well-balanced relations between the pianoforte and strings."

The first movement opens vigorously with a subject of sharp accentuations; the vigor soon yields to tenderness, and then the second subject appears as a haunting and eloquent duet between 'cello and viola. The second movement is one of the most moving pages in all of Schumann; it is in the nature of a funeral march. The third movement is a Scherzo with two trios, and the Finale a beautiful network of polyphonic writing.

Recommended recording: VM-736 (Sanromá; Primrose Quartet).

## SONGS

It is only to be expected that a lyric poet like Schumann should have found the song form particularly apt to his gifts. Schumann wrote some of the greatest *Lieder* in the entire repertory. Since so many of his songs are exquisite expressions of love, we must recall that he wrote many of them in 1840 immediately after his marriage to Clara Wieck. We must recall, too, something of that tempestuous and dramatic courtship, so marked by despair, frustration, humiliation, and hysteria as to delight the heart of a Victorian novelist. Robert first met Clara when, as a young man, he came to Leipzig and found quarters at the home of the Wiecks. At the time, Clara was only a child. Then and there began a beautiful attachment which was some years later to ripen into mutual love. This was a mating of true minds, both young people being extraordinary musicians, sensitive to and appreciative of each other's genius.

Unfortunately, Clara's father, Friedrich Wieck, looked with disfavor on the proposed match. For several years he used strategy, chicane, lies, and finally sheer brute force, to keep the lovers apart. He tried to poison their minds against each other. These were years of anguish for both Robert and Clara—for Robert particularly, whose nervous system was as delicately tuned as a musical instrument. They were years marked by separation sometimes too painful to be borne any longer; by hurriedly exchanged notes and surreptitious meetings in which the ecstasy of contact was often tainted by the necessary secrecy. They were years of heartbreak—but also years of an undying love that no autocratic force could successfully undermine. Ultimately,

Robert was compelled to fight Father Wieck's opposition in the Leipzig law courts—an action which, proving successful, enabled him to claim his bride legally.

Their marriage took place in 1840. The warmth of Clara's love temporarily healed Robert's scarred sensibilities. He felt as though reborn, not only as a man, but as an artist as well. The floodgates of his inspiration were lowered, and his music rushed from him with uncontrolled fury. During this marriage year he composed almost 140 of his magic *Lieder*, as an overflowing heart sought avenues for expression.

Hadow has written of the Schumann songs: "As illustrations of lyric poetry they are unsurpassed in the whole history of the art. With him the terms 'words' and 'setting,' 'melody' and 'accompaniment,' lose their distinctive meanings; all are fused into a single whole in which no part has the pre-eminence. He follows every shade of the poet's thought with perfect union of sympathy, he catches its tone, he echoes its phrase, he almost anticipates its issue. It is not too much to say that no man can understand Heine who does not know Schumann's treatment of the *Buch der Lieder*."

"His songs are interesting also in certain matters of form. He was the first composer who ventured to end with an imperfect cadence, if the words were abrupt or inconclusive, as for instance, *Im wunderschönen Monat Mai* and *Anfangs wollt ich fast verzagen*. Often, too, he ends his earlier verses with a half-close, and so makes the song continuous throughout, as in *Mondnacht* and the *Lied der Zuleika*. Another point is his curious use of declamatory passages, neither exact melody nor exact recitative, as in *Ich grolle nicht*. But no analysis can do justice to the beauty, the variety, and the profusion of his lyrics. The composer of *Frühlingsnacht*, *Widmung*, of *Die Löwenbraut* and *Die beiden Grenadiere* (*The Two Grenadiers*), of *Schöne Wiege* and *Er, der herrlichste von allen* has assuredly some claim to be considered the most poetical of musicians."

Other exquisite examples of Schumann's song genius include *Du bist wie eine Blume*, *Die Lotosblume*, *Der Nussbaum*, *Wanderlied*, and *Widmung* (*Du meine Seele*).

Recommended recordings: *The Two Grenadiers*, V-15825 (Kipnis); *Du bist wie eine Blume*, V-1859 (Lehmann); *Frühlingsnacht*, V-1856 (Lehmann); *Die Kartengegerin*, V-1732 (Lehmann); *Lorelei*, V-1764 (Elisabeth Schumann); *Die Lotosblume*, V-1931 (Janssen); *Der Nussbaum*, V-14610 (Anderson); *Ständchen*, V-1764 (Elisabeth Schumann); *Wanderlied*, V-7473 (Schorr); *Widmung*, V-1931 (Janssen).

## SONG CYCLES

### *Dichterliebe*

The *Dichterliebe*, Op. 48, includes sixteen songs to lyrics by Heine. A. Eaglefield Hull wrote the following analysis of this masterpiece: "The first, '*Im wunderschönen Monat Mai*,' is famous for its ending on a half cadence, as if the issue of the love question is still in suspense. . . . In the next song, '*Aus*

*meinen Tränen sprießen,* the treatment of the perfect cadence itself is most original, being held in long suspense, and joined as it were to the next phrase. In the third song, music supplies but the slightest framework, while the singer worships the rose and the lily, the sun and the dove, but gives his love to the fairest. . . . The mood of these songlets changes as quickly as the pictures at a cinema. The next song, *Wenn ich in deine Augen seh'*, shows very plainly where Hugo Wolf derived his intimacy of sentiment. In the fifth song, *Ich will meine Seele Hauchen,* Schumann reveals to us this wonderfully acquired art of counterpoint without our ever suspecting it. . . . The sixth number, *Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome,* tells of a little image of Our Lady, wreathed with angels and flowers in the Cologne Münster. For the poet, the tender eyes and refined features of the image are those of his own dearest love. *Ich grolle nicht* is too well known to need comment; the boldness of its harmony never seems to lose power. The accompaniment of the eighth number, *Und wüsstest du die Blumen, die kleinen,* places us in a delicious flower-garden. . . . The note of tragedy at the end is wonderfully reflected in the postlude. In the ninth, *Das ist ein Flöten und Geigen,* must be played entirely as a piano solo; the vocalist plays 'second violin' in the orchestra. . . . *Hör Ich das Liedchen klingen* is another case of the pianist's predominance. The postlude is again eloquent of that anguish of heart which is perhaps the chief feature in Schumann's psychical outfit. . . . The sad feeling is dashed away by the next song, which makes light of a heart broken in two. . . . In *Am leuchtenden Sommermorgen* occurs one of the most wonderful modulations in all music, effected with Schumann's natural simplicity. The fourteenth song . . . should be sung lightly (*Allnächtlich im Traume*). The fifteenth number is the famous *Aus alten Märchen winkt es.* In the final number, *Die alten, bösen Lieder,* Schumann's power of contraction leads him to the perfect cornerstone for this song cycle."

Recommended recording: CM-486 (Lehmann).

### ***Frauenliebe und Leben***

The eight songs in this cycle (Op. 42) are to lyrics by Chamisso. Though the lyrics are not usually of a high order, most certainly not of the quality of Heine's, yet (as J. A. Fuller-Maitland commented) "the music to which they are set reveals to us an extraordinary depth of penetration into . . . the intensity and endurance of a pure woman's love. The master touch appears at the end, in the short instrumental coda which summarizes all that has gone before and welds all the songs into a perfect whole, just as is done in the *Dichterliebe*."

The songs in the cycle are: 1. *"Seit ich ihn gesehen"*; 2. *"Er, der Herrlichste von allen"*; 3. *"Ich kann's nicht fassen"*; 4. *"Du Ring an meinem Finger"*; 5. *"Helft mir, ihr Schwestern"*; 6. *"Süsser Freund, du blickest"*; 7. *"An meinem Herzen"*; 8. *"Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan."*

Recommended recording: VM-737 (Traubel).

## SYMPHONIES

Schumann's symphonies have been subjected to considerable criticism, particularly for their supposedly inadequate instrumentation and meager developments. Philip Hale admirably summed up the strength and weakness of the symphonies. "It has been urged against Schumann," wrote Hale, "that his symphonies were thought for pianoforte and then orchestrated crudely, as by an amateur. This, however, is not the fatal objection. . . . A more serious objection is this: the genius of Schumann was purely lyrical, although occasionally there is the impressive expression of a wild and melancholy mood, as in the chords of unearthly beauty soon after the beginning of the overture to *Manfred*. Whether the music be symphonic, chamber, a pianoforte piece, or a song, the beauty, the expressive force lies in the lyric passages. When Schumann endeavored to build a musical monument, to quote Vincent d'Indy's phrase, he failed; for he had not the architectonic imagination or skill. His themes in symphonies, charming as they often are, give one the impression of fragments, of music heard in sleep-chasings. Never a master of contrapuntal technique, he repeated these phrases over and over again instead of broadly developing them, and his filling in is generally amateurish and perfunctory. . . . This music is never spectacular; it is never objective. . . . In his own field, Schumann is lonely, incomparable."

*Symphony No. 1 in B-flat ("Spring")*

Though Schumann himself called his First Symphony (Op. 38) by the descriptive title of "Spring," the title is to be taken more figuratively than literally. This is not a music to convey (as Beethoven's *Pastorale* did) the song of birds, the flowing of the brook, or the maiden-beauty of a country scene fresh with the springtime rain on it. The "Spring" in Schumann's symphony is an emotion rather than a season of the year. It is the springtime the composer found in his heart after his emergence from the "winter of discontent" which was his courtship of Clara Wieck, and into the exhilarating sunshine of happiness that came with his marriage. "I do not wish to portray, to paint," Schumann himself confessed. "But I believe firmly that the period in which the symphony was produced influenced its form and character and shaped it as it is."

The First Symphony belongs to the year of 1840—the year of Robert Schumann's honeymoon with Clara. Within a month his first venture in the symphonic form passed from sketches into the final draft. He called it the "Spring" symphony because his inspiring impulse had been a Spring poem by Boettger. Actually, he might have called it the "Clara Schumann Symphony." In it (consciously or otherwise) he poured his feelings for his wife. What we hear in the wonderful Larghetto, when the 'cellos repeat the opening song of the violins to a discreet accompaniment of wood-wind chords, is contentment of the purest kind; what finds description in the almost Schubertian scherzo, and

in the opening dance phrases of the Finale, is the lusty peasant spirit of a man who has dropped his last care and is at peace with the world.

The Symphony was first performed on March 20, 1841, by the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra conducted by Felix Mendelssohn. The audience was cordial, but hardly more than that; the musicians of the orchestra were upset by some of the defective orchestration (which the composer later remedied). But so high had Schumann's spirit soared that he could look upon this rather unimpressive reception as a major success; he even went so far as to write to a friend that his symphony was received "as no other had since Beethoven!"

Recommended recording: VM-655 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

### *Symphony No. 2 in C major*

Schumann's Second Symphony, Op. 61, was composed in 1845-6. The joy which had produced the First Symphony had been dissipated. "I sketched the symphony," he explained, "while suffering severe physical pain; indeed, I may well call it the struggle of my mind which influenced this music, and by which I sought to beat off my disease. The first movement is full of this struggle."

No attempt should be made to find in this symphony any reflection of Schumann's bitterness. Except for the first movement, which is in febrile mood, the music is buoyant and exhilarating. The greatest single movement of the work is the second, the Scherzo, as infectious and engaging and cogent a piece of writing as Schumann ever put to paper. The third movement is the familiar introspective and poetic Schumann who writes song-like music of a half-yearning, half-poignant character. In the last movement, the music rises to dramatic heights in its stirring expression of power and courage, occasionally relieved by moments of genuine tenderness.

Frederick Niecks prefers to interpret the entire symphony in terms of struggle. "In the four movements we recognize as it were four stages of a struggle ending in victory. In the first movement, the composer seems to be wrestling actively with evil powers. The feverish Scherzo reveals indecision, more passivity. The sweet Adagio is an outpouring of prayer and resignation, hope and thankfulness. And in the last movement, he gathers up his whole strength and triumphantly begins the battle of life again."

The symphony was introduced under the baton of Felix Mendelssohn at the Leipzig Gewandhaus on November 5, 1846. It was subsequently revised by the composer.

Recommended recording: VM-488 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy).

### *Symphony No. 3 in E-flat ("Rhenish")*

Schumann intended his Third Symphony, Op. 97, as "a picture of Rhenish life," and—he added with quiet satisfaction—"I succeeded." It was composed in 1850, and was introduced under the direction of the composer at Düsseldorf on February 6, 1851.



The symphony is in five movements. The first (*Lebhaft*) opens majestically with a sweeping subject for strings with which the second theme—somewhat elegiac and tender—provides a contrast. The second movement (*Sehr mässig*) is in a light-hearted vein; W. F. Apthorp said that the principal theme of this movement is an adaptation of an old German drinking song. The third movement (*Nicht schnell*) is lyric, its two themes both eloquent and poetic. The fourth movement (*Feierlich*) is often described as the “Cathedral Scene,” inspired as it was by the installation of Archbishop of Geissel as Cardinal in the Cologne Cathedral. It is majestic music. The finale (*Lebhaft*) depicts a gay rustic festival in a small Rhenish town.

“Again Robert’s creative power was ever new in melody, harmony, and form,” wrote Clara Schumann after the first performance, and it was a true comment. The Third Symphony is perhaps the most original and important of Schumann’s works in this form.

Recommended recording: CM-464 (New York Philharmonic—Walter).

#### *Symphony No. 4 in D minor*

The Fourth Symphony, Op. 120, was Robert’s birthday gift to his wife Clara (1841). Actually, as the date reveals, it was Schumann’s second and not his fourth symphony. But, dissatisfied with it at the time, he refused to permit its publication until ten years later when he had subjected it to drastic re-writing.

Originally, Schumann referred to this work as a “*Symphonische Phantasie*,” because he meant the four movements to be played without interruption and regarded it as a complete work in one piece. The symphony is Schumann’s lyric poem for orchestra—slighter in character and outline than his other three symphonies, but also more poetic in content.

J. A. Fuller-Maitland described the Fourth as follows: “A certain arpeggio-like figure which appears at first in the Introduction in the most unobtrusive way conceivable turns out to be nothing less than the motto of the whole work. It is the chief subject of the ensuing Allegro, and it is there used with a pertinacity, and varied with an ingenuity in the highest degree remarkable. . . . During the Romance and the Scherzo, the motto is unheard but it reasserts itself in a passage of surprising grandeur, which is used to lead into the finale.”

In its revised form the symphony was introduced at Düsseldorf on March 3, 1853 under Schumann’s direction. The symphony was dedicated to Joachim.

Recommended recording: VM-873 (London Symphony—Walter).

# SCRIABIN

ALEXANDER SCRIABIN, b. Moscow, 1872. Intended for a military career, he entered the Moscow Military School. After completing his course there, he turned to music. He failed to get a diploma at the Moscow Conservatory because of his independent ideas on composition. His musical career began when he toured Russia as concert pianist, but it was not long before he combined this with composition. Between 1898 and 1904, he was professor at the Moscow Conservatory. In 1906, he began a long sojourn away from Russia, during which time he wrote his major works for orchestra. He died in Moscow in 1915.

THE dominant trait of Scriabin's music is the stream of mysticism which courses through it. As Boris de Schloezer explains: "One idea inspires his work and gives it being. The whole of his activities from his First Symphony onwards, constitutes a series of attempts to achieve the embodiment of that idea. The unique work towards which his symphonies and sonatas are but sketches or fragments, he used to call 'The Mystery.' It was to be a liturgy constituting a synthesis of all arts and in which the whole of humanity and nature would take part. In his mind, art was but a means of achieving a higher form of life—a purely romantic conception. The vast metaphysical and religious system created by him is analogous to Indian mysticism. It is symbolized in *L'Acte Préable*, a cantata which was to serve as an introduction to the Mystery, but of which we possess the text only, and a few musical fragments."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *The Divine Poem*

*The Divine Poem*, Op. 43 (Symphony No. 3 in C major) was composed in 1903, and was introduced on May 29, 1905 at a Châtelet concert in Paris under the baton of Artur Nikisch.

"*The Divine Poem*," wrote Tatiana Fedorovna Schloezer (Scriabin's wife) in an exhaustive analysis of this work, "represents the evolution of the human spirit which, torn from an entire past of beliefs and mysteries which it surmounts and overturns, passes through Pantheism and attains to a joyous and intoxicated affirmation of its liberties and its unity with the universe (the divine 'Ego')."

Mme Schloezer interprets the three movements of this work in the following manner:

"I. Struggles: The conflict between the man who is the slave of a personal god . . . and the free, powerful man—the man-god. The latter appears to triumph, but it is only the intellect which affirms the divine Ego, while the individual will, still too weak, is tempted to sink into Pantheism.

"II. Delights: The man allows himself to be captured by the delights of the sensual world. He is intoxicated and soothed by the voluptuous pleasures

into which he plunges. His personality loses itself in Nature. It is then that the sense of the sublime arises from the depths of his being and assists him to conquer the passive state of his human 'Ego.'

"III. Divine Play: The spirit finally freed from all the bonds which fastened to it its past of submission to a superior power, the spirit producing the universe by the sole power of its own creative will, conscious of being at one with this Universe, abandons itself to the sublime joy of free activity—the Divine Play."

### *Poem of Ecstasy*

Scriabin's *Poème d'Extase*, Op. 54, composed in 1907–8, was received with a violent clash of opinion on its first performance in New York in 1908. There were those who considered it a masterpiece, while others called it the work of a charlatan.

It is divided into three movements: A Prologue in which the two leading motives of the work are introduced; a second section in sonata form; and a coda.

"The basic idea," wrote A. Eaglefield Hull, "is the Ecstasy of untrammelled action, the Joy in Creative Energy. The Prologue contains the following two motives which may be said to symbolize: (a) human striving after the ideal; (b) the Ego theme gradually realizing itself. The sonata-form proper starts with a subject symbolic of the soaring flight of the spirit. The leading motives of the Prologue are almost immediately brought into conjunction with it.

"The second subject, *Lento*, is of a dual character, the higher theme on a violin solo . . . apparently typifying Human Love, while the lower theme is marked *serioso*. The third subject then enters, an imperious trumpet theme summing the Will to rise up. . . . The themes grow in force and pass through moods of almost kaleidoscopic duration—at times spending dreary moments of delicious charm and perfume, occasionally rising to climaxes of almost hilarious pleasure; at other moments experiencing violent stormy emotions and tragic cataclysms. In the development we pass through moments of great stress, and only achieve brief snatches of the happier mood. . . . The three subjects are repeated in full followed by moods of the utmost charm, and pleasurable feelings become more and more ecstatic, even *scherzando*, at length reaching an *Allegro molto* coda of the swiftest and lightest flight imaginable. The trumpet subject becomes broader, and assumes great majesty, until it finally unrolls itself in a rugged and diatonic epilogue of immense power and triumphant grandeur."

Recommended recording: VM-125 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

### PIANO MUSIC

Scriabin is one of the foremost piano composers produced by Russia. He has composed remarkable Etudes, Poems, Preludes, Nocturnes, Waltzes, and

Sonatas which have achieved a place of unquestioned distinction in contemporary piano music, and whose influence upon all later composers for the piano has been potent.

It was with piano music that Scriabin inaugurated his career as a composer. He showed some early pieces to the Russian music publisher Jurgenson, who accepted them for publication. They thus came to the attention of that distinguished Russian critic and publisher, Belaiev, who, detecting real genius in them, decided not only to publish all of Scriabin's music henceforth, but also to sponsor his artistic career. The first works to be published by Belaiev appeared in 1895: a Sonata for Piano in F minor (Op. 6), and Twelve Etudes (Op. 8).

"Scriabin's early works," wrote Alfred J. Swan, "breathe forth a Chopin atmosphere. But Scriabin is far from being a mere imitator. He is Chopin's rightful successor, and, as such, carried to an extreme certain peculiarities of Chopin's style. What lay in the background with Chopin comes to the fore with Scriabin: the music grows in nervousness . . . ; the tissue becomes closer and more compact, the writing neater, and more scrupulous than even Chopin's."

In his études, preludes, and sonatas, Scriabin wrote with extraordinary technical virtuosity and with a ceaseless search after new effects and qualities. His innovations, wrote Sabaneyev, "consisted mainly in creating new chords. This enthusiasm of his was a sort of game with him. Scriabin sought to outdo all his contemporaries in creating chords with the greatest number of notes. In this queer sport, there was a little of the same naïveté which had been the earmark both of Scriabin's philosophy and of his mystic 'apocalyptics.' As often happens, musical nature conquered and smothered out much of what theoretically appeared absolutely unacceptable. During this latter period, to which belong . . . his last sonatas, his style reached an extraordinary exquisiteness and refinement, his harmony a rare complexity along with a saturation of psychologic content. Side by side with this, we observe a dissolution of rhythm, a reduction of melody to the minimum, a severance of the musical web and line which turns into a series of spasmodic exclamations, and destroys the impressions of unity and wholeness."

## SONATAS

### *Fifth Piano Sonata*

Scriabin's Fifth Piano Sonata, Op. 53, is prefaced by a motto from the *Poem of Ecstasy*:

"I call you to life, O mysterious forces,  
Submerged in depths, obscure!  
O thou creative spirit, timid embryo of life,  
To you I bring courage!"

It is in one movement, with an Introduction and Prologue, and its musical material comprises five principal thematic subjects. "It is a masterpiece of

formal construction," wrote A. Eaglefield Hull, "richly informed with poetry, and is one of the most highly imaginative pieces ever written. The Introduction opens with a darkly obscure harmony in which some impetuous force appears to be generating. The Prologue gives out the motto theme in high-light. This is followed by a motive of aspiring flight. Tender, caressing arabesques die away into silence after which the first movement proper enters with light passages over a bass arpeggio. This gradually gains in power until an imperious trumpet-like summons rings out. Confused mysterious shudderings follow this until . . . a soft lyric utterance of great beauty and tenderness is heard . . . Huge climaxes of tonal force follow, and a curious movement of dazzling velocity appears, finally reaching a full and powerful display of the motto theme, before the curtain of obscurity at length blots everything from view."

Recommended recording: Friends of Recorded Music—26-27 (Heyman).

*Ninth Piano Sonata ("The Black Mass")*

A. Eaglefield Hull calls this sonata (Op. 68) "one of the most attractive of all Scriabin's creations. The form is tightened up into one movement of great pliancy and cohesion. . . . It is on 'sonata' lines as regards construction, but the form does not obtrude itself in the least."

Hull's analysis of the sonata follows: "The sonata opens in a nebulous atmosphere. . . . The four chief themes soon appear in succession. They go through a wonderful development, and even transformation. The harmony is beautiful, interesting, and also amazingly distorted at times. The peroration is masterly and striking, and the sonata ends in that dim, mysterious light in which the dream opened."

# SHOSTAKOVICH

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH, b. St. Petersburg, 1906. Studied with Nikolaev, Steinberg, and Glazunov at the Leningrad Conservatory. He began composing in his fourteenth year, and before long impressed leading Soviet musicians with his creative gifts. In his nineteenth year he composed his First Symphony which brought him international fame. Subsequent works made him the leading composer of the Soviet Union. For a brief period he came into conflict with the Soviet authorities who denounced him for vulgarity, especially in his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mzensk*. But it was not long before Shostakovitch rehabilitated himself as the most important composer of his country, particularly with his Fifth Symphony. He was especially publicized through the works interpreting the struggle of the Soviet Union against Nazi aggression—the *United Nations* hymn and the Seventh Symphony. In 1941, he won the Stalin Prize for his Piano Quintet.

SHOSTAKOVICH's music is the vigorous expression of a fresh and vibrant personality. It is muscular, the music of a man more accustomed to act than to brood; it is strong and sinewy. The rhythm of his music frequently has cogent driving power; his themes often sting like the lashes of a whip. Though usually couched in classical forms, his music is modern in spirit and idiom, with a discreet use of dissonances. The most striking feature is its enormous fecundity of thematic ideas. He piles theme upon theme in an amazing architectonic construction; in place of developments, he usually uses more ideas.

His best vein has been the satiric, in the expression of which he has been full of zest, vitality, and wit. Like Prokofiev his irony can have acidity, his burlesque can be raucous, his humor can be more malicious than gentle. More recently, however, his music has acquired greater sobriety; he has striven for deeper and more personal writing. But he is still most infectious in his wittier moments; for, truth to tell, his slow movements are often self-conscious and turgid, and his meditative or poetic postures appear affected.

That he is extraordinarily gifted there can be little doubt. His mastery of form and orchestration appears to have been instinctive with him; from the very first he has betrayed a complete command of his resources. He can also achieve moments of great power and originality. But, it must be added, one defect keeps him from greatness. He yields too often to cheap ideas, to a banality that is embarrassing. There is hardly a work of his in which some tawdry pages do not appear, in which occasional clichés do not betray the fact that he has little power of self-criticism.

Yet we must measure Shostakovich by his greatest pages, not by his weaker ones. He is a dynamic figure in modern music, irresistible in his strength, seductive in his wit, overpowering in his originality.

## CONCERTO

### *Piano Concerto*

Shostakovich's Piano Concerto, which was composed in 1933 and introduced by Shostakovich himself in Leningrad on October 15, 1933, is scored

for string orchestra and solo trumpet. It is an intensely satiric work, though the slow movement is sobered by quiet introspection. It is in four movements, a pause coming only between the second and the third movements. The first movement (*Allegro moderato*) opens with a muted trumpet call which is followed by the principal theme announced by solo piano. It is a Prokofiev-like theme, saucy and piquant. After a brief development, martial music is heard with emphasis placed on the solo piano and the trumpet; the music has a predominantly satiric bent. A *Moderato* passage leads to the slow movement (*Lento*), which contains some of Shostakovich's most deeply felt writing. A broad and tender melody is sung by the strings (in the Phrygian mode) and is answered by a second subject announced this time by the solo piano. The music rises to heights of great emotional intensity. The third movement (*Moderato*) is built almost entirely out of two cadenzas for the solo piano, the first unaccompanied (opening the movement), the second accompanied. The fourth movement (*Allegro con brio; presto*) is in Shostakovich's most dashing and brilliant vein. It is scintillating virtuoso music, highly spiced.

Recommended recording: CM-527 (Joyce; Hallé Orchestra—Heward).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *The Age of Gold:*

#### "Polka" and "Russian Dance."

In 1930, Shostakovich composed music for a ballet entitled *The Age of Gold*, a satire on decadent capitalism, Fascism, and bourgeois psychology. For this ballet he wrote in his most acidulous vein—blatant, vulgar, burlesque music which seems to embody all the defects of the victims it lampoons. Two dances from the ballet have since become popular. The Polka, with its brilliant use of the xylophone, is intended as a caricature (of all things!) of the Geneva Disarmament Conference. The Russian Dance, utilizing accordion-like harmonies, sounds like a travesty on band music. Lavishly orchestrated, it is full of energy.

Recommended recording: V-118592 (St. Louis Symphony—Golschmann).

## PIANO MUSIC

Shostakovich has written with extraordinary effect for the piano. Being a pianist himself, he knows the instrument as intimately as only a virtuoso can, and knows how to draw from the keyboard brilliant and rich effects. He handles his music with such knowledge, vigor, freshness and independence that it seems to be a true departure from what has gone before. As a matter of fact, the ground he covers has been covered before. He has written two piano sonatas, a set of fantastic dances (Op. 1) and—his best work for the piano—twenty-four preludes written in the twenty-four keys (composed one

a day). There is an engaging variety of mood and feelings in these delightful morsels—gaiety, wistfulness, nostalgia, satire, drama. His originality, however, must not be minimized. Like all of Shostakovich's work, his piano music is strong, forthright, emphatic. Never at a loss for novel expression, his inventions have brought a stimulating vitality to the music of our day.

Recommended recording: Three Fantastic Dances, Timely 1305 (Castagnetta); Prelude in A flat major, orchestrated by Stokowski, V-8928 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

## QUINTET

### *Piano Quintet*

When Shostakovich's Piano Quintet was introduced at the Moscow Festival of Soviet Music on November 23, 1940, it scored a sensation. "It is music," wrote *Pravda*, "created in full maturity of power, a work that opens new vistas to the art." It was awarded the highest prize ever given to a chamber work, the Stalin Prize of 100,000 rubles.

Nicolas Slonimsky analyzed the Quintet as follows: "[It] opens with a slow introduction for piano solo. The main body of the first movement is a slow Scherzo, and is akin to a similar section of the Sixth Symphony. Then comes the fugue, and a fast Scherzo. The slow movement, Intermezzo, leads to the Finale, in rondo form."

Recommended recording: CM-483 (Stuyvesant Quartet; Ruvkin).

## SYMPHONIES

### *First Symphony*

Surely there are few first symphonies so completely integrated and so fully realized as Shostakovich's (Op. 10), which he composed in his nineteenth year! It was introduced on May 12, 1926 by the Leningrad Philharmonic directed by Nicolai Malko and presented Shostakovich as one of the most original and uniquely endowed of Soviet composers, a personality of contagious vitality and robustness. Subsequently, it was performed by major orchestras throughout the world and, more than any other single work, helped to establish the composer's reputation.

It is, at least in three of its four movements, dynamic music to magnetize its hearers. The themes are electrifying; the rhythms are sweeping; the harmonies are brilliant. Occasionally there are faint reminiscences of the styles of other composers—Prokofiev and Tchaikovsky particularly. But the work is much less derivative than we should have a right to expect in the music of a nineteen-year-old composer, and it unmistakably presents the personality of its author. A brief introduction leads directly into the first theme, announced by the strings, a briskly paced strain. A second subject has Tchaikovskian reminiscences and injects a temporary respite into the febrile atmo-



sphere. The music grows more and more agitated, more and more martial, but the movement ends on a note of comparative tranquillity. The second movement (*Allegro*) is wind-swept music, in which the piano is featured prominently. It is music that sweeps like a hurricane and leaves the listener breathless. In the third movement, *Lento*, Shostakovich turns to introspection, a mood in which he is by no means at his best; the movement is long and attenuated. In the closing movement (*Allegro molto*) the energy is restored and the symphony closes in a burst of dynamic strength.

Recommended recording: CM-472 (Cleveland Orchestra—Rodzinski).

### *Fifth Symphony*

With his Fifth Symphony Shostakovich scored one of his most emphatic successes. The first performance took place on November 21, 1937 as part of the festivities marking the twentieth anniversary of the Soviet Republic. "The powerful rousing sounds of the Finale," wrote Alexei Tolstoy in *Izvestia*, "stirred the audience. All rose to their feet, infused with joy and happiness, streaming from the orchestra like a spring breeze. We cannot but trust the Soviet listener. His reaction to music is a just verdict." Its initial success has been repeated in this country where it has since become one of Shostakovich's most frequently played and most admired works. We find no difficulty in understanding the popularity of the music. It is stirring music, of great power and magnetism, from the very opening with its majestic thrusts of the strings. Of all Shostakovich's works, it has the least dross mixed with its gold, though one must confess that it is not altogether free of vulgarity. And it is one of the few Shostakovich works which have a deeply moving and personally felt slow movement.

The first movement is of majestic character, with a spacious design filled with intriguing details. The music has passion and sobriety, tranquillity and nervous agitation. The second movement (*Allegretto*) is in a lighter vein—gay, tuneful music. It is in the third movement (*Largo*) that the composer plumbs emotional depths. This is a long movement, and a complex one, but it is deeply affecting. In the last movement, the composer releases his long pent-up energies and yields to movement and sound, though not without occasionally relieving the tension by a tender moment that recalls earlier passages and moods of the symphony.

Recommended recording: VM-619 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

### *Seventh Symphony*

A great deal has been said and written about Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony. Though not by any means his greatest symphony, it is certainly the most publicized one. Its history is famous. It was composed in 1941 during the siege of Leningrad by the Nazis and was conceived, as the composer explained, "as a musical embodiment of the supreme ideal of patriotic war.

The work engrossed me completely. Neither the savage air-raids nor the grim atmosphere of a beleaguered city could hinder the flow of musical ideas. . . . I worked with an inhuman intensity."

In October 1941, when the government moved from Moscow to Kuibishev, Shostakovich went with it. He completed his symphony in that Volga capital, and it was there that the symphony was introduced, on March 1, 1942. Performances throughout the Soviet Union followed. Its success was without precedent. The score was photographed, and flown by air to the United States. After a vigorous scramble in which each major conductor tried to be the first to introduce it, the American première fell to Toscanini, who performed it over a radio network (N.B.C.) on July 19, 1942. After that, every major orchestra in America performed it: In the fall of 1942 it was heard in New York conducted by Toscanini, Koussevitzky, and Rodzinski—and within the space of a few weeks!

"The first movement," wrote Slonimsky, "opens with a vigorous C-major theme, in powerful unisons, punctuated by the rhythmic spurts of the trumpets and kettledrums. This is the theme of the Leningrad citizen, who has become the hero of the siege. The tonality darkens . . . the music softens; there is a moment of lyrical lassitude. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a little puppet-like tune is heard. . . . Relentlessly it grows, takes on body, spreads all over the orchestra, magnified, yet unchanged in its melodic pattern. A Soviet writer described it as a 'psychological portrait of the enemy.' . . . The theme of the citizen-hero struggles through, integrated, from melodic allusions, into a powerful restatement. But the 'iron rats' leave a path of destruction in their march. The victims are mourned in a threnody intoned by a bassoon solo. The second movement, *Moderato poco Allegretto*, is a Scherzo. . . . Shostakovich describes the Scherzo as 'recalling glorious episodes of the recent past.' The third movement, *Adagio*, portrays, according to Shostakovich, 'the thrill of living, the wonder of nature.' After a chorale-like introduction in full chords . . . a nervous, gypsy-like dance is heard, a recollection of carefree gaiety, and the movement is concluded in optimistic clarity. The finale, *Allegro non troppo*, follows the slow movement without pause. It begins with a broad descriptive melody. Imperceptibly, the music comes to rhythmic life, becomes fugal, and increases its dynamic energy. . . . [It] expresses the will to victory. To convey this determination, the Finale summons all the resources of the orchestra, ending in a crushing C major."

# SIBELIUS

JAN SIBELIUS, b. Tavastehus, Finland, 1865. His studies took place in Helsingfors (with Busoni), Berlin (with Becker), and Vienna (with Fuchs and Karl Goldmark). Soon after his return to Finland, he was inspired by a glowing national consciousness that influenced his musical writing; his compositions now became touched with a national flavor. For a while he taught at the Helsingfors Conservatory. His success as a composer, however, brought him a government grant which enabled him to devote himself entirely to creative work. During the next two decades he traveled extensively, visiting the United States in 1914. At the same time, he wrote the works that made him a national hero and a world-famous figure. Indicative of his fame were the celebrations held in many musical capitals to mark his seventieth and seventy-fifth birthdays in 1935 and 1940 respectively.

ELSEWHERE, the editor of this book wrote as follows about Sibelius's music: "The outstanding trait . . . is its intense nationalism. His works—both such obviously national expressions as *Finlandia*, *Kalevala*, or *Karelia*, and the more absolute creations such as the symphonies—stem from autochthonous sources. One would be at a loss to enumerate those technical features in Sibelius's musical writing which are essentially Finnish. Sibelius never borrows directly from folk material, nor even closely apes melodic and rhythmic patterns of his country's folk songs. And yet his works assume an unmistakable Scandinavian physiognomy. They have the gray, melancholy landscape of a Scandinavian countryside; they are drenched with the brooding elegiac tenderness and cold beauty of a Norse saga. Sibelius's melody has the broad expanse of the North country; like the North country, his melody is only gently touched by a soft sun. His harmonic colors are subdued by Northern restraint. At moments his music possesses the strength and heroism of the Scandinavian heroes of the sagas; at other moments, a quiet introspection. Sibelius's music comes not only from a Finnish heart, but from the heart of Finland as well.

"Except for its nationalism, the music of Sibelius is not easy to characterize. It falls into too many conflicting categories. It is guided by a strong classicism, and yet who can deny its frequent warm flush of romanticism? It is, at different times, strongly personal and individual, as in the later symphonies, and effetely characterless as in his march from the *Karelia Suite*. It sounds the vibrant note of tragedy, as in the plangent Andante of the Second Symphony or the restrained lament of the Largo of the Fourth Symphony. Yet the tread of futility and pessimism does not stride through the pages of Sibelius's music as it does, for example, in the later symphonies of Tchaikovsky. While Sibelius's works are suffused with a soft melancholy as gray and bleak as a winter sky in Scandinavia, his music at times bursts into a soft ripple of laughter, like the chuckle of a bright-faced child—the Third Symphony, for example, and portions of the *Karelia Suite*.

"The one persistent note that Sibelius sounds in his greater works, particularly in the symphonies from the fourth to the seventh, is that of grandeur;

he achieves majestic images which are his own. His music often rises to a plane of sublimity—the closing of the Fourth Symphony is an apt illustration—which appears to be other-worldly. Like some religious ritual, the best pages of Sibelius's later symphonies give the listener the feeling of being spiritually purged."

## CONCERTO

### *Violin Concerto in D minor*

Sibelius composed his romantic and ardent violin concerto (Op. 47) in 1903, and revised it extensively in 1905. In October 1905 the revised version was introduced in Berlin, with Carl Halir playing the solo violin part, and Richard Strauss conducting; the original version had been introduced in Helsingfors on February 8, 1904, by the violinist Victor Novacek, with the composer directing the accompaniment.

Rhapsodical in its nature, the concerto is one of the least characteristic of Sibelius's masterpieces. It is lyric, at moments sentimental—as, for example, in the very opening subject which is pronounced by the solo violin, and the ingratiating second subject, introduced by 'cellos and bassoons and carried on by the bassoons. Tender and sentimental material is alternated with robust to give the entire first movement a pleasing variety of mood and character. The second movement, *Adagio di molto*, is a page of poetic music with subdued colors; and the closing movement is music of defiance and jubilation, utilizing thematic subjects that are of characteristically Finnish design.

Recommended recording: VM-309 (Heifetz; London Philharmonic—Beecham).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Finlandia*

*Finlandia*, Op. 26—more famous as the musical symbol of Finland than is its national anthem—was born during a trying period in Finland's lifelong struggle against oppression. In 1899, Imperial Russia (then ruling Finland with iron discipline) issued its famous "February manifesto" in which it completely abrogated the legislative powers of the Finnish Diet. Worse still, the Tsarist regime bore down ruthlessly on free speech and closed one Finnish newspaper after another. As a symbol of protest against this tyranny, the Finnish people inaugurated in November 1899 a series of entertainments whose proceeds were to go to a Press Pension fund. For these entertainments Sibelius provided an orchestral suite entitled *Finland Awakes*. It was the finale of this suite which was later to become world-famous as *Finlandia*.

In 1900, Sibelius revised the final section of his suite and retitled it *Suomi*, the Finns' name for their country. In France, the work was performed as *La Patrie*, and in Germany as *Vaterland*. Audiences everywhere perceived in this music not only the program which Sibelius intended for it—namely, the im-

pressions of an exile upon his return to his native land—but the very character and soul of Finland. So complete a musical realization of Finnish personality and ideals is it, and so successfully does it convey the Finnish spirit, that many hearers have thought (and still think) that it utilizes actual folk material; but Sibelius himself has emphatically stated that, although the principal themes assume the outward features of Finnish folk music, the melodic material was entirely his own invention.

Eventually, *Finlandia* returned to its native land, transporting the Finnish people into an intoxication of national ardor. It was so inflammatory that Tsarist Russia was forced to suppress its performance throughout Finland; and while permitting the work to be performed in the Empire, the government insisted that some nonprogrammatic title, such as *Impromptu*, be given it.

When, in 1905, (following a successful general revolt in Finland against Russian tyranny) Russia was compelled to make far-reaching concessions to Finland, the tone poem was allowed to be performed in its native land under its real name—*Finlandia*. And during the next twelve years—until the Revolution gave the Finns their independence—it was the national expression of a people fighting stubbornly for freedom.

*Finlandia* is the voice of the Finnish people. The choir of reeds intone a hymn of supplication—for freedom and independence. The strings sing a prayer of hope. The reeds and strings then alternate to speak of the good life in which truth and self-respect and freedom are the dominant forces. A monumental climax thunders the ultimate triumph of a struggling people to preserve its identity.

Recommended recording: C-11178D (Cleveland Orchestra—Rodzinski).

### (En) *Saga*

*En Saga* (meaning 'A Saga'), Op. 9, was Sibelius's first important work, and the work in which Finnish national music emerges for the first time to artistic significance. Sibelius has himself explained the origin of this tone poem: "Robert Kajanus once pointed out to me how desirable it was to have a piece by me in the regular repertory of the orchestra, written for the general public and not making too great demands on their powers of concentration and comprehension. This would be an advantage both for the orchestra and for my popularity as a composer, Kajanus said. I was not at all disinclined to write a piece in a more popular style. When I got to work I found that some notes I had made in Vienna were suitable for adaptation. In this way, *En Saga* appeared."

Though *En Saga* was intended as a popular repertory number, it assumed greater importance and scope in the writing than the composer had intended. Fired by nationalistic ardor, Sibelius, when he put pen to paper, forgot his original intentions and wrote as he felt. As a result, the themes were fashioned upon unorthodox patterns, and the construction of the entire work was conceived along subtle lines. Instead of becoming popular music, it was music of

Finnish temperament and character: it was, as a matter of fact, the first large orchestral work to interpret Finland.

Recommended recording: VM-658 (London Philharmonic—Beecham).

### *(The) Swan of Tuonela*

*The Swan of Tuonela*, the most exquisite of Sibelius's tone poems, is the third section of a suite entitled *Lemminkäinen*, Op. 22. The four parts of the suite are as follows: "Lemminkäinen and the Maidens"; "His Stay in Tuonela"; "The Swan of Tuonela"; and "Lemminkäinen's Homecoming." The suite was inspired by Finland's epic poem, the *Kalevala*.

To the published score of *The Swan of Tuonela*, the composer appended the following descriptive program: "Tuonela, the Kingdom of Death . . . is surrounded by a broad river of black water and rapid currents, in which the Swan of Tuonela glides in majestic fashion and sings."

Rosa Newmarch wrote as follows about this music: "The majestic but intensely sad, swan-like melody is heard as a solo for English horn, accompanied at first by muted strings and the soft rolls of drums. Now and then this melody is answered by a phrase given to first violoncello or viola, which might be interpreted as the farewell sigh of some soul passing to Tuonela. For many bars the brass is silent, until suddenly the first horn (muted) echoes a few notes of the swan melody with the most poignant effect. Gradually the music works up to a great climax, indicated *con gran suono*, followed by a treble *pianissimo*, the strings playing with the back of the bow. To this accompaniment, which suggests the faint flapping of pinions, the swan's final phrases are sung. The strings return to the natural bowing and the work ends in one of the characteristic sighing phrases for the violoncello."

Recommended recording: V-17702 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy).

### *Tapiola*

The name that Sibelius here gives to Finland, *Tapiola*, comes from that of the ancient Finnish forest god *Tapio*. The work is one of Sibelius's most felicitous examples of atmospheric writing. It is built from a single phrase which is developed, enlarged, and transformed into an elaborate network of magic sound—a Nature portrait of the most exquisite hues and tints. The mood of the entire work is suggested by the quotation which the composer appended to the published score (Op. 112):

"Wide-spread they stand, the Northland's dusky forests,  
Ancient, mysterious, brooding savage dreams;  
Within them dwells the Forest's mighty God,  
And wood-sprites in the gloom weave magic secrets."

Ernest Newman points out that the use of a single phrase from which to build the entire work is by no means a *tour de force*. "The fact is that the

ingenuity is not there for its own sake, as a piece of technical calculation, but as the inevitable evolution of the one central idea."

Recommended recording: VM-848 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

### *Valse Triste*

Though this sentimental and often mawkish piece of music took Continental Europe by storm a few decades ago, it is one of the least creditable of Sibelius's works. But, since its popularity persists, it is deserving of comment. It is one of several numbers which Sibelius wrote as incidental music for Järnefelt's play *Kuolema* in 1903, Op. 44. The following program is appended to the music: "It is night. The son, who has been watching beside the bedside of his sick mother, has fallen asleep from sheer weariness. Gradually a ruddy light is diffused through the room: there is the sound of distant music . . . strains of a valse melody. . . . The sleeping mother awakens, rises from her bed and . . . begins to move silently. She waves her hands and beckons in time to the music. Strange visionary couples appear, turning and gliding to an unearthly valse rhythm. . . . Then she seems to sink exhausted on her bed and the music breaks off. Presently she gathers all her strength and invokes the dance once more, with more energetic gestures than before. Back come the shadowy dancers, gyrating in a wild, mad rhythm. The weird gaiety reaches a climax; there is a knock at the door, which flies wide open; the mother utters a despairing cry; the spectral guests vanish. The music dies away. Death stands at the threshold."

Recommended recording: V-14276 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

## QUARTET

### *Voces intimae*

This quartet, Op. 56—which Sibelius entitled "Intimate Voices"—was written during a period of depression in the composer's life. Sibelius suffered from a growth in the throat in 1908 which was feared to be a cancer. Placing himself in the hands of specialists in Berlin, Sibelius was subjected to thirteen painful operations until the tumor was removed. It was, as could be expected, a period of great mental as well as physical suffering. And it was after he had emerged from this crisis that Sibelius composed this quartet.

Precisely why Sibelius called it "Intimate Voices" has never been adequately explained. Cecil Gray believes that the reason can be found in the slow movement, which is one of the most personal of all Sibelius's writings—a quiet page of self-probing and introspection in which Sibelius seems to be searching his own soul. It is this Adagio which is the high artistic peak in the entire work, and one of Sibelius's acknowledged masterpieces. The work has four other movements: Andante—Allegro molto moderato, in which a slow eight-bar introductory section progresses to sprightly music of infectious

appeal; a brilliant Vivace, the thematic material of which bears striking resemblance to that of the first movement; the Adagio di molto, spoken of above; a strongly accented Allegretto; and a passionate concluding Allegro.

Recommended recording: VM-344 (Budapest String Quartet).

## SYMPHONIES

It is with his symphonies that Sibelius has assumed his imposing position in the world of music; it is here that he is the uniquely endowed master. If Sibelius succeeded in proving nothing else in his magnificent seven symphonies he has demonstrated once and for all that no classic form is ever outmoded for the composer who has sufficient imagination and creative talent to fill it with heroic ideas and strongly felt sentiments. No new worlds are explored in the Sibelius symphonies. Certain qualities of instrumentation, certain harmonic colors, he may have derived from the experiments of modern composers. But, except for these negligible influences, he has been untouched by the innovations of the past forty years. He has continued musical development from the point where Brahms left off, along the path of romanticism—a romanticism, to be sure, slightly cooled by Northern temperament. The symphonic form of Brahms is, for the most part, supple enough for Sibelius's purposes; the long-accepted conventions of harmony and melody are adequate for him. He has forcefully proved that originality in a composer need not consist in smashing traditions and constructing an entirely new vocabulary. In his symphonies, Sibelius has evolved as personal and as individual a speech as though he had twisted musical forms into distorted shapes. There is no mistaking the authorship of his windswept melodies, fresh, healthy, strong. There is no mistaking the hand that constructed these subtly built cathedrals, idea by idea, theme by theme, into monumental structures. There is no mistaking the heart that felt and expressed the moving beauty and sadness of some of the slow movements. Sibelius's symphonies are not only the proud utterances of a great nation; they are also the high-minded expression of a great man.

*Symphony No. 1 in E minor*

*Symphony No. 2 in D major*

Sibelius's first two symphonies, Opp. 39 and 43, are of nineteenth-century vintage. They are Slavic in mood and expression, with a Tchaikovskian tendency to overstate drama and to yield to exaggerated emotions. Economy of means was to be achieved in the later symphonies; in his first two symphonies Sibelius piles effects, colors, feelings with an overlavish hand. They make good listening, and have never lost their hold on audiences everywhere. But they only suggest Sibelius's later powers.

The First Symphony was composed in 1899, and was introduced in Berlin under the baton of Kajanus on July 18, 1900. The work has unmistakable



Tchaikovskian flavor, particularly in the haunting loneliness and melancholy of the slow movement (Andante). Tchaikovskian, too, are the demoniac peasant energy of the Scherzo and the concluding Quasi una fantasia. If we were to select those sections which are most strongly suggestive of the later Sibelius, we would point to the very opening of the symphony, the introductory passage for solo clarinet which has Scandinavian bleakness and poignancy and which sets the atmosphere for the entire work.

Sibelius composed his Second Symphony in Rapallo, Italy—in a room overlooking a beautiful garden of camellias, roses, almond trees, cypresses, and palms. The setting in which the symphony was written is reflected in the music, which is pastoral in character, though with an occasional suggestion of tragic foreboding. It was introduced in Helsingfors on March 8, 1902, under the direction of the composer.

Georg Schneevoigt explains that in the first movement (Allegretto) the composer tried to reproduce the peaceful, pastoral life of Finland in times of contentment and freedom; the second movement (Tempo andante ma rubato) is intensely patriotic, charged with high feeling against any form of oppression; in the third movement (Vivacissimo) the awakening of national consciousness is portrayed; and the finale (Allegro moderato) is an expression of hope in a future deliverance that stirs in Finnish hearts.

This has proved to be the most popular of all the Sibelius symphonies, and its popularity can well be understood. It is dramatic, moving, tragic, stirring and overwhelming in its emotions and climactic surges. In his subsequent symphonies, Sibelius was to be more subtle in his effects; here he overpowers his listeners with unbridled feelings and brute force.

Recommended recording: E minor, VM-290 (Minneapolis Symphony—Ormandy); D major, VM-272 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

### *Symphony No. 4 in A minor*

There are those who look upon this symphony, Op. 63, as Sibelius's masterpiece, and such enthusiasm is well warranted. Perhaps no other symphony of Sibelius, except perhaps the Seventh, is so integrated, so of one cloth, so suffused with high-minded thinking and poignancy of feeling as this work is. It is touched with an autumnal beauty of an almost Brahmsian flavor (a principal theme in the first movement actually has Brahmsian traits!), and is throughout a work of mellow poetry.

Its lack of sensuous appeal and its emphasis on restrained emotions and sensitive suggestions makes this symphony less easily assimilable than the Second; and for these very reasons, too, it is the greater and more subtle work. As a reviewer for the London *Times* wrote, there is here "no accumulation of energy, no building to a climax, no display of rhetoric; just a number of ideas, each dwelt on as long as it showed capacity for growth, each left as soon as it had generated another. . . . The fineness of this symphony is of the ascetic type which refuses the luxuries of sound and finds a miracle in the

simplest relation of notes. From these relations the tunes grow naturally as folk tunes grow. From the intonation of two notes at the outset comes the whole of the first movement; a perfect fifth is the source of the most expansive melody which crowns the third movement. There is nothing abstruse about it."

The symphony, composed in 1911, was introduced that year in Helsingfors (April 3).

Recommended recording: VM-446 (London Philharmonic—Beecham).

### *Symphony No. 7 in C major*

Sibelius's Seventh Symphony, Op. 105, stands with his Fourth as the composer's masterpiece in the symphonic form. It is free in its form, episodic in its use of thematic material, without any attempt at formal developments or contrasts in tonality. It is in one movement, and throughout it maintains a somber and epical character. It opens on a shuddering note of mystery which develops into an utterance of passionate, even savage, intensity. The music then passes to a majestic grandeur, after which its character changes to that of lightness and a fleeting moment of gaiety. The symphony grows and develops, passing through different stages of feeling from the poetic to the agitated until it arrives at a stirring climax.

Sibelius composed the symphony in 1925, and it was introduced by the Stockholm Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sibelius, on March 24, 1924.

Recommended recording: VM-394 (B.B.C. Symphony—Koussevitzky).

## SMETANA

BEDŘICH SMETANA, b. Leitomischl, Bohemia, 1824. Educated in Prague and Pilsen. In 1843, Smetana decided upon music as a career, and, going to Prague, he became a pupil of Proksch. In 1850, through the latter's influence, he became concert-master of an orchestra belonging to Ex-Emperor Ferdinand I of Austria. Three years after this he composed the *Triumph-Symphonie* in honor of the marriage of Franz Joseph, Emperor of Austria. In 1856, he went to Gothenburg, Sweden, and there held several important musical posts. Subsequently, he returned to Bohemia to become one of its most important musicians, dividing his efforts between teaching, composing, and conducting. In 1869 he founded a dramatic school for the Bohemian Theater in Prague, later becoming its director. His last years were somber, afflicted first with deafness, and ultimately with insanity. He died in an asylum near Prague in 1884.

It is not possible to overestimate Smetana's importance in the history of Bohemian music. He is regarded as the founder of the modern Bohemian school of music, and as such he was the beacon guiding all Czech composers who followed him. A national composer, he showed with what success the

native Bohemian idioms could be used in the large forms of music; and all national Bohemian composers after him were inspired by his music. "It was Smetana," wrote Jan Löwenbach, "who was privileged not only to hear and imitate the spirit of his country's rich melodies and varied rhythms, but also to *feel* and to *express* it in a new way, and to adapt it to the modern spirit."

Smetana's music, however, is important not only because it has exerted a profound influence. It is important in its own right, too, as all inspired music inevitably is. Singing of his native country and in his country's idiom, he sang charmingly. "His music," wrote Paul Stefan, "sings to us today of the Bohemia of old—its woods and cultivated plains, its villages, its romantic hills and old legends, its great past and even its future. It is all one great pageant of song and dance—dancing to native rhythms of astounding variety, singing to melodies of unique beauty, such as his homeland had never achieved before."

## OPERA

### *The Bartered Bride*

In three acts, book by Karel Sabina, introduced at the National Theater in Prague, May 30, 1866.

Bohemian national music reached its first milestone with Smetana's masterpiece, *The Bartered Bride*, one of the greatest of all folk operas. Originally it was in two acts, with musical episodes interspersed with spoken dialogue. But Smetana revised and extended it, supplanting the spoken dialogue by recitatives and changing the two acts into three. In this new form it received its first great success outside of Bohemia in 1892—in Vienna, where it was a sensation. Thus began the great success of *The Bartered Bride* throughout the world of music. It was heard at the Metropolitan Opera House under the baton of Gustav Mahler in 1909.

"*The Bartered Bride*," commented Julien Tiersot, "is a simple opéra-comique, full of vivacity, movement, and color. The action, which takes place entirely in a public square, and in an inn of a Bohemian village on a festival day, has for a subject a typical vaudeville situation. . . . This is a work full of verve and gaiety; its author had certainly conceived it with pleasure."

Marie's parents want her to marry Wenzel, the idiot son of a wealthy landowner, but Marie is in love with Hans, a stranger to the village. The village marriage broker tries to bribe Hans to renounce Marie. Hans agrees to accept the three hundred crowns, but insists having his contract specify that Marie is to marry no one else than the son of Micha (the wealthy landowner). The broker agrees, and there is great rejoicing for everyone except Marie, who cannot understand why Hans has allowed himself to renounce her. The explanation lies in the fact that Hans is, after all, a long-lost son of Micha, and he can wed Marie and have the three hundred crowns as well.

"The music," wrote Julien Tiersot, "expresses all the moods (however simple) of the characters, is marked here and there by purely picturesque episodes: by choruses of peasants, by drinking songs, and, above all, by popular elements which contribute greatly in enlivening the work and in justifying its fame as a representation of the art of a people."

Many are the engaging pages in this delightful and effervescent score. Most celebrated are the Overture and the Dances (Polka, Furiant, and the Dance of the Comedians).

Recommended recording: VM-193 (Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra of Prague National Opera—Ostrcil).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *The Moldau (Vltava)*

Smetana wrote a cycle of six symphonic poems which paid tribute to his native land, its past and present, its people and its traditions. The entire cycle is called *Má Vlast (My Country)* and includes the following compositions: I. *Vitsegrad* (a historic Bohemian citadel which was a stronghold of Bohemian kings); II. *Vltava* (a picture of the River Moldau); III. *Sarka* (a Bohemian heroine who slew the Knight Ctirad); IV. *From Bohemia's Fields and Groves* (an idyllic picture of peasant and country scenes); V. *Tabor* (fortress of the Hussites); VI. *Blaník* (the mountain where Hussite heroes are buried and where they await resurrection).

The most celebrated of these six symphonic poems is, of course, the second, the tonal picture of the Moldau river. Appended to the score is a descriptive program which the music follows closely. "Two springs pour forth their streams in the shade of the Bohemia forest, the one warm and gushing, the other cold and tranquil. Their waves, joyfully flowing over their rocky beds, unite and sparkle in the morning sun. The forest brook, rushing on, becomes the River Moldau, which, with its water speeding through Bohemia's valleys, grows into a mighty stream. It flows through dense woods from which come the joyous sounds of the chase, and the notes of the hunter's horn are heard ever nearer and nearer.

"It flows through emerald meadows and lowlands where a wedding feast is being celebrated with song and dancing. At night, in its shining waves, wood and water nymphs hold their revels, and in these waves are reflected many a fortress and castle—witnesses to the bygone splendor of chivalry and to the vanished martial spirit of days that are no more. At the rapids of St. John the stream speeds on, winding through . . . the rocky chasm into the broad river bed, in which it flows on in majestic calm towards Prague, welcomed by the time-honored Vysehrad, to disappear in the far distance from the poet's gaze."

Recommended recording: V-12520-1 (Czech Philharmonic—Kubelik).

## QUARTET

*Quartet in E minor ("From My Life")*

Smetana wrote this Quartet in 1876, two years after he became aware of his growing deafness. This tragedy induced a mood of retrospection under whose influence he wrote a work that is strictly autobiographical. "In a sense," the composer explained, "[it] is private and therefore written for four instruments, which should converse together in an intimate circle about the things that so deeply trouble me."

Smetana provided a detailed explanation of the message of this music. The first movement "depicts my early love of art and native folk music, my romantic tendencies and unsatisfied yearnings. There is also a warning of future misfortune." (The misfortune here alluded to was the revolution of 1848 which forced Smetana to flee to Sweden.) The second movement, a polka, "recalls memories of my gay life in youth when I used to write dance music and give it away right and left to other young folk, being known myself as an enthusiastic dancer." In his third movement, a beautiful slow section, Smetana "recalls the bliss of my first love for the girl who afterwards became my faithful wife." And in the finale "my joy in discovering how to treat Bohemian national elements in my music is expressed; my success, in this direction, until the interruption of the terrible catastrophe, the beginning of deafness; a glimpse of the gloomy future, a slight ray of hope for betterment; painful impressions aroused by the thought of my artistic beginnings."

This Quartet has been orchestrated by Georg Szell, in which form it has been performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic.

Recommended recording: VM-675 (Primrose Quartet).

# STAMITZ

JOHANN WENZEL STAMITZ, b. Deutschbrod, 1717. He began the study of the violin at an early age, and in 1742 attracted notice with a performance at the coronation festivities of Emperor Karl VII in Frankfurt. He was taken to Mannheim by the Elector Palatine Karl Theodore where, by 1745, he rose to the rank of concert-master and conductor of the orchestra. His development of the orchestra made Mannheim the world center for orchestral performance. During this period he began writing symphonies for his orchestra. He died in Mannheim in 1757.

## SYMPHONIES

**T**HOUGH Stamitz wrote about fifty symphonies, none of them are heard today. He is included in this volume solely because of his importance in the development of the symphony. For the same reason no symphony of his is commented upon individually, his works being treated collectively.

Elsewhere in this volume, Franz Joseph Haydn is called the father of the modern symphony. This, of course, is true as far as it goes; but Haydn's far-reaching revolutions in the symphonic field would have been impossible had Stamitz never lived. If Haydn is the father of the modern symphony, Stamitz (founder of the so-called Mannheim school) is its grandfather; for it was Stamitz, more than any other single person, who wrote the first "symphonies" in the sense in which we today use that term. As Karl Nef says: "His first movements already approached the classical structure of the sonata-form: first and second theme, development, and recapitulation. His slow movements are charming in their expression of tender sentiment and are often scored in that flexible, mobile manner which is a characteristic of the newer orchestral music. . . . Stamitz also regularly inserted the minuet into the symphony. In this he anticipated Haydn."

Romain Rolland throws additional light on Stamitz's historic importance: "The roots of Beethoven exist already . . . in the Mannheim symphonies, in the work of that astonishing Johann Stamitz. . . . Through him, instrumental music becomes the supple garment of the living soul, always in movement, perpetually changing, with its unexpected fluctuations. . . . I have no hesitation in saying that a Stamitz symphony, though less rich, less beautiful, less exuberant, is much more spontaneous than a Haydn or a Mozart symphony. It is made to its own measure; it creates its forms; it does not submit to them."

The word symphony (or *sinfonia*) was in the beginning applied by composers to all orchestral music; thus an overture or a *ritornello* in an early opera was referred to as a *sinfonia*. As interest in instrumental music grew, the *sinfonia* gradually became an independent medium for composers, no longer just an incidental passage in an opera. But though the composers of the early 18th century exploited orchestral writing and called such work a symphony, it was as yet comparatively formless, without coherence or direc-

tion. Before Stamitz's day orchestral works had been composed by Corelli, Vivaldi, and Sammartini (himself a composer of some twenty symphonies); but even with Sammartini, a symphony was little more than an extended *sinfonia*. Thus the masters who preceded Stamitz had little conception of the symphony as a *form*; and Stamitz was among the first to realize what shape the symphony must assume if it was to achieve structural unity, balance, and contrast. And after Stamitz came Haydn and Mozart.

## JOHANN STRAUSS

JOHANN STRAUSS, Viennese waltz king and son of another famous waltz composer (named Johann Strauss, too), b. Vienna, 1825. Forbidden by his father to study music, he took his first violin lessons secretly. When his father abandoned the family, the son could pursue music unhampered. In 1844, he made his debut as composer and café-house Kapellmeister and at once triumphed. His career thereafter was one of endless successes which made him the idol of Vienna. In 1871, he found new glory when he wrote his first operetta, *Indigo*. In 1872, he visited the United States giving monumental concerts. In 1894, Vienna celebrated his fiftieth anniversary as a Kapellmeister with a week of celebration. Johann Strauss died in Vienna in 1899.

JOHANN STRAUSS was unquestionably one of the most famous and beloved composers of his generation. He was a composer of "popular" music, yet because he had genius the popular music he wrote has become immortal. As a matter of fact, great musicians have always appreciated Strauss. Hans von Bülow wrote that the Johann Strauss waltzes should be presented at symphony concerts because of their intrinsic musical value. Brahms once autographed a fan belonging to Strauss's wife with a few bars of the *Blue Danube* and the inscription: "Not by me—unfortunately." Offenbach, Verdi, Delibes, Goldmark, Wagner, and Gounod were only a few of the many other famous musicians who esteemed Strauss as their equal.

Truth to tell, Strauss had gifts which many a more serious composer might envy. He had an incomparable melodic talent, his rhythmic ingenuity was inexhaustible, his taste for instrumentation was sound, and he could touch a variety of moods and feelings with enchantment.

### OPERETTA

#### *Die Fledermaus*

In three acts, book by Haffner and Genée, introduced at the Theater-an-der-Wien on April 6, 1874.

*Die Fledermaus* is a classic in light-operatic literature, and up to the present

time is a model of what great operetta should be. It was based on a French comedy by Meilhac and Halévy entitled *Reveillon*, which the librettists Genée and Haffner adapted for Strauss.

This sparkling and magic operetta came at a black moment in Viennese history. In 1873, an economic disaster struck Austria which shook that country to its very roots. So far-reaching was it, that its effects were still profoundly felt a year later. It was, therefore, not an appropriate hour for the première of an operetta. That it proved successful under such conditions redounds to the credit of a masterpiece.

*Die Fledermaus* has for its plot a dramatic intrigue in which the chief character, instead of reporting to prison to serve a short term for a minor offense, proceeds to a masquerade given at the palace of Prince Orloff; while his wife's former admirer, chancing to visit her that night, is jailed when he is mistaken for her husband. In costume the wife, too, proceeds to the ball, where she carries on an intrigue with her own husband.

It is a clever and merry story, and for it Strauss wrote some of his most ironic, piquant, and engaging music. The masquerade at Orloff's gave Strauss an opportunity to write one of his greatest waltzes—a paean to Champagne. While, from beginning to end, the score abounds with the most felicitous melodies and the most intriguing gaiety.

Some of his contemporary critics said of Strauss that, in his operettas, he succeeded in bringing the spirit of the café to the opera house. This, in its way, is high praise. For the music of *Die Fledermaus* has none of the affectations one might expect in the work of a café composer turning to more serious efforts. It has all the grace and movement and poise of the best waltzes, all the subtle nuances, all the exquisite sensitivity. The humor is deft, sparkling with ironic glitter. The melodies are rich and intoxicating.

In Europe, *Die Fledermaus* has often been performed in the great opera houses—as great a tribute as any to the originality and importance of Strauss's score. He wrote his operetta for the delectation of the masses, and for their entertainment; but, because he was a man of genius, what touched was often transformed into a work of art.

Recommended recordings: Overture, V-8651 (Minneapolis Symphony—Ormandy); "*Mein Herr, was dächten Sie,*" and "*Klänge der Heimat,*" Decca 20280 (Lehmann).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *The Waltzes*

The Johann Strauss waltzes have never lost their fabulous popularity or appeal. The greatest of them include *On the Beautiful Blue Danube*, *Artist's Life*, *Vienna Blood*, *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, *Wine, Women and Song*, *Emperor Waltz*, *Voices of Spring*—music as fresh and pleasing and seductive today as on the day it was written. Strauss charm has proved to be deathless, because Strauss charm was touched with the finger of true creative genius.



He was a major figure in the artistic development of the waltz. "His reform of the waltz," wrote Paul Bechert, "reached a stage where it could not be improved upon. The originally simple form was developed by him into a thing of subtle art. It was no longer pure three-quarter rhythm, supported by simple broken chords in the bass and endowed with native melodic equipment; he made it an instrument for the expression of varying moods of the widest scope. Just as Schubert created the *Lied* out of the rudiments of simple folk songs, Strauss made of the waltz an art form in the highest sense."

More than once Strauss swept to unmistakable greatness in his waltzes. There is, for example, the *più lento* section in the *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, exquisite in its sensitive delicacy. The melodic material here is not only inspired; but it is also orchestrated with the utmost artistry. The slow symphonic opening of *Artist's Life* is a distinctive page in orchestral literature, written with imagination and poetic feeling; while the coda of the same waltz, in which all the themes of the work are repeated with superb craftsmanship, is a good example of Strauss's technical mastery.

Some of Strauss's greatest waltzes were composed soon after his marriage to Henrietta Treffz on August 27, 1862. Under her influence he grew more mature, deeper, and more inspired than ever. His waltzes, once merely gay and ebullient, now became symphonies for dancing, with richer melodies, fuller harmonies, and more magical instrumentation. Such a waltz was *Morning Journals* (*Morgenblätter*) composed in 1864 in competition with Offenbach's *Evening Journals* which the famous Parisian had written for his visit to Vienna. And such a waltz was *On the Beautiful Blue Danube*, composed in 1867 to a set of verses by Karl Beck, on a commission from the Men's Choral Society in Vienna.

Recommended recordings: An Album of Strauss Waltzes (including *Wine, Women and Song*; *Vienna Blood*; *Artist's Life*; *Emperor Waltz*; *Voices of Spring*), VM-445 (Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler); The Music of Johann Strauss (including *On the Beautiful Blue Danube*, *Fledermaus* Overture, *Tales from Vienna Woods*, *Acceleration Waltz*), VM-262 (Minneapolis Symphony—Ormandy).

# RICHARD STRAUSS

RICHARD STRAUSS, b. Munich, 1864. Educated at the University of Munich, with music study under Tombo, Benno Walter, and F. W. Meyer. In 1885 Hans von Bülow appointed him assistant conductor of the Meiningen Orchestra; upon Bülow's retirement, Strauss succeeded him. In 1886, Strauss composed *Aus Italien*, the first of his works in a programmatic vein. A series of remarkable tone poems followed, beginning with *Macbeth*, which placed Strauss in the front rank of modern composers, a champion of the new school. He maintained an imperial position in the world of music with his operas and songs. During his creative career he also achieved note as a conductor. In 1933, when the Nazis came to power, he was appointed president of the Kulturkammer, but he soon came into conflict with the political authorities and was forced to resign his post and enter comparative retirement.

Few composers have had the good fortune enjoyed by Strauss—that of seeing their works become classics in their own lifetimes. Strauss's best tone poems, operas, and songs enjoy that permanency in the musical repertory usually reserved for established classics. They are no longer discussed or debated over; they belong to the heritage of music, and give the assurance of remaining there permanently.

But Strauss's satisfaction over his eminence must be mixed with the pain of realizing that he has outlived his creative power. Creatively, Strauss died many years ago. In this respect he is a phenomenon. His greatest work was done comparatively early, and thereafter came deterioration. He did not, as do most other composers, grow, develop, and mature with the passing of the years. His masterpieces are the fruits of his comparative youth; his weakest works are the products of his maturity and old age.

Who can question that in his early tone poems, songs, and operas Richard Strauss was a man of genius? At the age of thirty he was the most strongly endowed, the most original and inspired composer of his age. He stood alone. His music, bursting from him in full-statured maturity like Minerva from the brain of Jupiter, was the utterance of a born creator. What inexhaustible imagination went into that orchestral palette, that harmonic and rhythmic language, that high-minded thinking!

Today, Strauss is still a famous composer, his fame resting solidly and securely on the works he wrote forty years ago. Since that time he has produced abundantly, but his music has become effete and anemic. The consummate technical mastery is still there, but the heart, the poetry, the imagination, the dynamic force of other years are gone. Worst of all, he has often taken to imitating himself, in a pathetic attempt to recapture something of his vanished glory.

## OPERAS

In 1894 Strauss composed his first opera—*Guntram*. *Feuersnot* came in 1901. Four years after this, he wrote his first masterpiece in the operatic form—*Salome*. Subsequently, he wrote numerous operatic works, but of these only

three represent the work of a man of genius: *Salome*, *Elektra*, and (in a quite different vein) *Der Rosenkavalier*. The same prodigious inventiveness in the use of musical materials which we find in his best tone poems is likewise to be found in these three operas; and not only this, but also an admirable sense for what makes good theater, and an extraordinary capacity to write dramatically for the voice.

### *Elektra*

In one act, book by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, introduced at the Dresden Opera on January 25, 1909.

*Elektra*, Op. 58, followed Strauss's first successful opera, *Salome*, by four years. It was presented at the Dresden Opera on January 25, 1909 under the direction of Ernst Schuch. "It is a prodigious orchestral orgy," wrote a critic in a cable to the *New York Times*, "with nothing that can be called music in the score, and makes superhuman demands upon the physical and mental powers of the singers and players. The marvelous imitative effects of the orchestra are blood-curdling, drastic, and gruesome to the last degree. It is fortunate for hearers the piece is no longer for it would be too nerve-racking."

Subsequent critics have, however, sounded a more rhapsodic note. "This demoniac character, this creation of Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss," wrote Lawrence Gilman, "is a wonderful conception; and the music-drama that incloses it is a work of immense and shattering power. At its best it has exalted beauty; and in many pages it compasses a noble pathos and a tragic grief."

*Elektra* marked the first collaborative venture of Richard Strauss and the Austrian poet, Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Himself a musician, besides being a fine dramatist and poet, Hofmannsthal proved to be an ideal librettist. Strauss later often spoke of the poet as his *alter ego*. "You are a born librettist," Strauss once wrote to him, "which is, in my opinion, the greatest compliment, for I consider it far more difficult to write a good operatic text than a fine drama." The collaboration of Strauss and Hofmannsthal persisted for almost twenty-five years and resulted in many operas, including *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and *The Egyptian Helen*.

Hofmannsthal built his libretto on the drama by Sophocles. Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus have killed King Agamemnon, sent his son Orestes into exile, and abused his daughters, Chrysothemis and Elektra. Elektra vows to avenge this infamy. She is about to murder Clytemnestra and Aegisthus with the same axe which has killed Agamemnon when Orestes enters and executes the murder. In ecstasy, Elektra dances until she falls dead.

### *Der Rosenkavalier*

In three acts, book by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, première at the Dresden Opera on January 26, 1911.

*Der Rosenkavalier*, Op. 59, is Strauss's most charming opera. It is in his most engaging vein, witty, lyrical, poignant, seductive.

For some time Strauss had been eager to write a comic opera, something in the nature of *Die Fledermaus*. He wanted to write a playful score, tender, ironic, burlesque, passionate. He conveyed his wishes to his collaborator, Hugo von Hofmannsthal. "I shall try to put myself in sympathy with the requirements, possibilities, and stylistic canons of comic opera," the poet answered. . . . "If I succeed, as I confidently hope to do, the result will be something which, in its blending of the grotesque with the lyrical, will to a certain extent correspond with your artistic individuality—something which will be strong enough to keep its place in the repertory for years, perhaps for decades."

Hofmannsthal had not overestimated his powers. The libretto with which he provided Strauss was remarkable for both its comic and its dramatic possibilities. It created two characters of unforgettable vividness—the sad and aging Marschallin and the ridiculous and rotund Baron Ochs. It reproduced the background and atmosphere of old rococo Vienna.

The Marschallin is having breakfast with seventeen-year-old Octavian (with whom she is flirting) when her cousin, the Baron Ochs, arrives. He wishes someone to carry a silver rose, as a token of his esteem, to his betrothed, Sophie. The Marschallin suggests Octavian. When he brings the rose to Sophie, Octavian falls in love with her. Baron Ochs is then treated coldly by Sophie. Accusing Octavian of having stolen his sweetheart away, the Baron challenges Octavian to a duel and is slightly wounded. Soon afterward, the Baron has a rendezvous with the Marschallin's maid, in a public tavern, and after he makes advances to her, the maid takes off her outer clothing and reveals herself to be—Octavian. The object of ridicule, the Baron leaves shamefacedly. Octavian is free to marry Sophie, and the Marschallin magnanimously releases him from any obligations to her.

For this sprightly libretto, Strauss wrote his greatest operatic score, a score inexhaustible for magic of mood and feeling. It produces the effect of spontaneity, and yet is as consummate an artistic production as the master has achieved. It is well shaded; it has subtle contrasts; it has warmth and the pulse of the human heart-beat. It is alive and bright-faced throughout. Full of broad satire, it has caught in its music the ridiculous postures and affectations of Baron Ochs. Yet at other moments it has genuine pathos; the page of music in which Strauss describes the Marschallin's feeling that she is growing old is one of the most moving passages in all opera, the intensity of its expression having incomparable poignancy.

Famous are the waltzes which course and ebb throughout the opera, lending it unforgettable lilt and seductive buoyancy. But enchanting though these waltzes are, there are greater moments in the opera. The Marschallin music of the first act is Strauss at the height of his powers. As Lawrence Gilman wrote, "the man who conceived this music is an authentic lord of tone, amaz-

ing in the range of richness and expressiveness of his art." Infectious, too, are the old-world Italian Serenade of Act I, and the Trio "*Bin von' so viel Finesse charmiert*," and closing duet "*Ist ein Traum*" from Act III.

Recommended recording: abridged, VM-196 (Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra of Vienna State Opera—Heger).

### *Salome*

In one act, book by Hedwig Lachmann, introduced at the Dresden Opera, on December 9, 1905.

It was with *Salome*, Op. 54, that Strauss first came into his own as a composer of operas. Scheduled for its première in Vienna, it was turned down by the censors and denounced by the singers as unsingable. Finally, the Dresden Opera accepted it, and there it triumphed. "It was considered almost certain," wrote the *Allgemeine Musikzeitung*, "that the intelligent and educated Dresden public . . . would protest angrily and loudly at an opera whose story exceeds in gruesomeness and perverted degeneracy anything that has ever been offered in a musical work for the stage. The fears were not realized, for the opera had a thunderous, stormy, and unanimous success."

In England, however, the censors refused to permit a performance on the grounds that the work was immoral. In America, the first performance created a veritable tempest. After the first performance, righteous-minded citizens descended upon Conried, manager of the Metropolitan Opera House, furiously denouncing him for permitting the performance of such an obscene work. The clergy joined in the battle. Even the critics joined in the chorus of outraged feelings. Krehbiel wrote that "the stench of Oscar Wilde's play had filled the nostrils of humanity," while another writer spoke of the opera as a "decadent and pestiferous work." Before the second performance could be put on, Conried received a curt note from the directors of the Metropolitan informing him that they considered "the performance of *Salome* objectionable and detrimental to the interests of the Metropolitan." *Salome* was withdrawn.

The libretto is, of course, an adaptation of the famous Biblical tale as dramatized by Oscar Wilde. *Salome*, who hears the imprisoned Jochanaan cursing Herod, Tetrarch of Judea, asks that the prisoner be brought before her. She tries, unsuccessfully, to seduce Jochanaan with her beauty. When Herod enters, she asks him for Jochanaan's head. After she has performed for Herod the seductive Dance of the Seven Veils, her request is granted. When Jochanaan's head is brought to her on a silver platter, she kisses his lips. Disgusted by this sight, Herod orders *Salome's* death.

Into this opera Strauss poured his wealth of sensuous melody, his rich harmonizations, his subtlety of musical characterization, his luscious instrumentation, and his abundant passion and emotion. The music is profoundly moving with its orgiastic colors and sounds.

Salome's Dance, as sensual a page of music as is to be found in opera, is often heard at symphony concerts.

Recommended recording: Salome's Dance, C-11781D (Cleveland Orchestra—Rodzinski); "Ah! Du wolltest mich nicht deinen Mund," V-8682-3 (Lawrence; Padeloup Orchestra—Coppola).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

Alexander Ritter was the greatest single influence in Richard Strauss's life. Strauss was a young man when he first met the musician-philosopher. He had already composed several works, including a Symphony and a Piano Quartet—none of which gave indications of his artistic future. Then he became a friend of Ritter, a man of profound intellect. In endless conversations on art, in extensive theorizing about the esthetic mission of music, Ritter opened new horizons for the young composer, pointed out new directions. "His influence was in the nature of a storm wind," Strauss later confessed. "He urged me on to the development of the poetic, the expressive in music as exemplified in the works of Liszt, Berlioz, and Wagner." Because of Ritter, Strauss decided to abandon the classical forms he had been using up to now, and to adopt the more plastic form of the Liszt tone poem; to desert the creation of "pure" symphonic music for music of dramatic expression. Ritter inspired in Strauss independent thinking, and as a result, Strauss's music changed character and personality.

The first work to reveal Ritter's influence was *Aus Italien* which, on its first performance in 1886, was booed and hissed in Munich. But Strauss was not to be dissuaded from the direction he had now chosen. Sure of himself and of his artistic mission, Strauss wrote the first of his tone poems, *Macbeth*, in 1888. *Don Juan* came in 1889. And from that moment on, the man of genius had hit his stride.

In the tone poems that Strauss wrote between 1888 and 1893, not only was there a bewildering technique which seems capable of handling every situation naturally and effortlessly—a new voice, indeed, was speaking. This music revealed a beauty never before sounded so fully and richly. The hot-blooded passion and youth of *Don Juan*, the irony and malice of *Till Eulenspiegel*, the religious ecstasy of *Zarathustra*, the poignant tragedy of *Death and Transfiguration*, the jolly impudence of *Don Quixote*, the grandeur of *Ein Heldenleben*—these attitudes, moods, atmospheres, and feelings were now being expressed in a new way. "Strauss taught his generation a new approach to the problem of making instrumental music articulate and significant," wrote Lawrence Gilman. "He showed them how to deal with it in two seemingly contradictory ways: how to expand, and how to concentrate it. He applied to it an immensely widened range of human experience. He seemed to touch life with generous daring, and at every side—at its loveliest and noblest, at its most disordered, pitiable, and grotesque. He had learned how to convey ex-

perience still drenched in its essential colors, pungent with its veritable odors, rich with all its implications."

His tone poems made Strauss a storm center of the musical world. A few proclaimed him a prophetic voice; but the majority called him a charlatan. To most music lovers at the close of the nineteenth century, Strauss's tone poems appeared episodic, rambling, incoherent, and noisy. One critic called *Till Eulenspiegel* "a vast and coruscating jumble of instrumental cackles about things unfit to be mentioned." Critics were satiric about Strauss's elaborate orchestra, and his use of such outlandish instruments as a wind machine and a watchman's rattle. Strauss's realism in translating into music the bleating of sheep, the galloping of horses, the babbling of wives in the market-place, aroused no end of hilarity.

However, familiarity bred admiration. As the music was heard again and again—and there was no dearth of Strauss performances!—its true greatness became obvious. Though the music *was* pretentious, somewhat blatant, even vulgar, it had the power of true genius. Its recognition, therefore, could not be slow in coming.

### *Death and Transfiguration*

*Tod und Verklärung*, Op. 24, was the third of Strauss's tone poems. It was composed in 1889 and was introduced at Eisenach on June 21, 1890, under the composer's baton.

Alexander Ritter wrote the poem which serves as the program for the music even though it was written *after* the music was composed. "In the little room, dimly lighted by only a candle end, lies the sick man on his bed. He has wrestled despairingly with Death. Now he has sunk exhausted in sleep. . . . But Death does not long grant sleep and dreams to his victim. Cruelly he shakes him awake, and the fight begins afresh. Will to live and power of Death! What a frightful wrestling! Neither bears off the victory, and all is silence once more! Sunk back, tired of battle, sleepless, as in fever-frenzy the sick man sees his life pass before his inner eye. . . . First the morning red of childhood. . . . Then the youth's saucier play—exerting and trying his strength—till he ripens to the man's fight, and now burns with hot lust after the higher prizes of life. The one high purpose that has led him through life was to shape all he saw transfigured into a still more transfigured form. Cold and sneering, the world set barrier upon barrier in the way of his achievement. . . . And so he pushes forward, so he climbs, desists not from his sacred purpose. What he has ever sought with his heart's deep yearning, he still seeks in his death sweat. . . . Then clangs the last stroke of Death's iron hammer, breaks the earthy body in twain, covers the eye with the night of death. But from the heavenly spaces sounds mightily to greet him what he yearningly sought here: deliverance from the world, transfiguration of the word."

The work can be divided into four distinct sections. The first is full of mystery and suspense, descriptive of the death-scene. The second section, febrile

in character, is dominated by a nervous and agitated subject sometimes described as the "fever theme." When the excitement passes, a page of rare serenity begins to recall the days of youth. The work ends on an eloquent note of spiritual exaltation, as the theme of liberation sounds.

Recommended recording: CM-492 (All-American Youth Orchestra—Stokowski).

### *Don Juan*

It was with *Don Juan*, Op. 20, that Strauss first emerged as a man of genius. It was the second of his tone poems, was composed in 1889, and introduced in the same year by Hans von Bülow and the Weimar Court Orchestra.

The music was inspired by a poem of Nicolaus Lenau. "My Don Juan is no hot-blooded man eternally pursuing women," explained Lenau. "It is the longing in him to find a woman who is to him incarnate womanhood, and to enjoy, in the one, all the women on earth, whom as individuals he cannot possess. Because he does not find her, although he reels from one to another, at last disgust seizes him and this disgust is the devil that fetches him."

Three principal themes dominate Strauss's tone portrayal of Lenau's Don Juan. The first opens the work—fiery and tempestuous, sweeping through the orchestra like a hurricane wind; it symbolizes the restless and passionate Don Juan. The second theme, which follows soon thereafter, describes the object of Don Juan's longing. The third, a vigorous and majestic subject for horns, is the Don Juan theme. The work ends poignantly with a shudder as the disillusioned Don Juan yields to disgust.

Recommended recording: CM-X190 (Pittsburgh Symphony—Reiner).

### *Don Quixote*

Strauss's "Fantastic Variations on a Theme of a Knightly Character"—the *Don Quixote*, Op. 35—was composed in 1897, and was introduced on March 18, 1898 at the Gürzenich concerts in Cologne under the baton of Franz Wüllner. The work is in three sections: I. Introduction; II. Theme and Variations; III. Finale. Cervantes' famous and lovable Don is represented by a solo 'cello, while Sancho Panza, the Don's squire, is depicted first by bass clarinet and tenor tuba, and subsequently by a solo viola.

"The introduction," wrote Max Steiner, "begins immediately with the hero's motive and pictures with constantly increasing liveliness by other themes of knightly and gallant character life as it is mirrored in writings from the beginning of the seventeenth century."

In the second section, the solo 'cello announces the "theme of knightly character," which then undergoes a series of variations describing the Don's fabulous exploits.

Variation I. The Knight and the Squire set forth on their journey. The beautiful Dulcinea of Toboso inspires the knight to heroism. Seeing windmills, Don Quixote takes them for an enemy horde. He prepares to attack



them. A breeze arises, and the Knight, angry at the challenge, attacks and is knocked down.

Variation II. The victorious battle against the Host of the Great Emperor of Ailfonfaron. Don Quixote, persuaded that a great army is approaching, rushes to attack it. But it proves to be only a flock of sheep, which scatters in panic at his onrush.

Variation III. Dialogue of the Knight and the Squire. Sancho questions the purpose of such a life, and refuses to be convinced by Don Quixote's words about honor and glory. Finally, Don Quixote bids him hold his tongue.

Variation IV. The Adventure with the Penitents. A band of pilgrims approaches. Don Quixote, thinking it is a band of robbers, attacks and is knocked down senseless.

Variation V. The Knight's Vigil. Dulcinea comes to Don Quixote in a vision, and the knight yields to the ecstasy of love.

Variation VI. The Meeting with Dulcinea. An uncouth country wench approaches, and Sancho playfully points her out to Don Quixote as Dulcinea. Don Quixote then becomes convinced that some foul magic has been worked upon Dulcinea, and he vows vengeance.

Variation VII. The Ride Through the Air. The Knight and his Squire sit blindfolded in a wooden horse which they think will carry them through space. They imagine that they are flying through the air, as if on wings. (Here Strauss uses his famous wind-machine.) But on looking about them they see that they are still on the ground.

Variation VIII. Journey in the Enchanted Bark. Don Quixote sees an empty boat and decides that it has been sent in order to bring him to the accomplishment of some brave deed. He and Sancho embark, but the boat upsets, and they are forced to swim to shore.

Variation IX. Combat with the Two Magicians. Don Quixote is again on his horse, eager for adventure. Two monks come on mules. Believing that they are magicians who have done him harm, Don Quixote attacks and puts them to flight.

Variation X. Don Quixote, defeated by the Knight of the White Moon, returns home and resolves to be a shepherd.

In the finale, Don Quixote, chastened by his experiences, realizing that all his hopes, fancies and dreams have been illusory, succumbs quietly to death.

Recommended recording: VM-720 (Feuermann; Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy).

### *Ein Heldenleben*

Strauss composed *A Hero's Life*, Op. 40, as a companion piece to *Don Quixote*. It was introduced in Frankfurt-on-the-Main on March 3, 1899 under Strauss's baton. "Having . . . sketched the tragicomic figure of the Spanish Knight whose vain search after heroism leads to insanity, he presents in *A Hero's Life* not a single poetical or historical figure, but rather a more general

and free ideal of great and manly heroism—not the heroism to which one can apply an everyday standard of valor, with its material and exterior rewards, but that heroism which describes the inward battle of life, and which aspires through effort and renouncement towards the elevation of the soul.”

The work is in six sections.

I. The Hero. The nobility and heroism of the protagonist is portrayed in the theme which opens the work, a theme of power and strength.

II. The Hero's Antagonists. Some half-dozen themes (mostly for the wood wind) describe the petty jealousies, hatreds, and suspicions of the hero's enemies. The hero theme is heard, as he sets out to overcome his adversaries.

III. The Hero's Helpmate. This is one of the great love pages in modern music. The hero's beloved is represented by a solo violin, which is by turns playful, coquettish, and amorous. Finally, the entire orchestra bursts into a luscious love song, sensuous and ecstatic.

IV. The Hero's Battlefield. A flourish of trumpets announces the call to battle. The Hero plunges into warfare; the theme of the loved one is heard, inspiring him to greater deeds. The foe is slain.

V. The Hero's Mission of Peace. The Hero, victorious in battle, now summarizes his achievements in times of peace. Strauss identifies himself with his character as he quotes in this section from some of his most famous works.

VI. The Hero's Escape from the World. Resignation and contentment now replace the Hero's former restiveness. He takes leave of the world. The Hero theme returns—now solemn—and the work ends with music of a funereal character.

Recommended recording: CM-441 (Cleveland Orchestra—Rodzinski).

### *Thus Spake Zarathustra*

Strauss was ever a passionate admirer of Nietzsche, and it was perhaps inevitable that he should have chosen the work called *Also sprach Zarathustra* as the basis for one of his tone-poems. But, as Strauss explained, “I did not intend to write philosophical music or to portray in music Nietzsche's great work. I meant to convey by means of music an idea of the development of the human race from its origin, through the various phases of its development, religious, and scientific, up to Nietzsche's idea of the Superman. The whole symphonic poem is intended as my homage to Nietzsche's genius, which found its greatest exemplification in his book, *“Also sprach Zarathustra.”* And in an interview Strauss added that his purpose in this music was “to embody the conflict between man's nature as it is and man's metaphysical attempts to lay hold of his nature with intelligence—leading finally to the conquest of life by the release of laughter.”

Strauss suggested the following program for his music: “First movement: Sunrise. Man feels the power of God. Andante religioso. But man still longs. He plunges into passion (second movement) and finds no peace. He turns towards science, and tries in vain to solve life's problem in a fugue (third

movement). Then agreeable dance tunes sound and he becomes an individual and his soul soars upward while the work sinks far beneath him."

Strauss composed *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Op. 30, in 1896, and himself directed its first performance at Frankfort-on-the-Main on November 27 of the same year.

Recommended recording: VM-257 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

### *Till Eulenspiegel*

*Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks* (*Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*), Op. 28, is perhaps the greatest of the Strauss tone poems. It was inspired by a celebrated German legend about a practical joker named Till Eulenspiegel who went through life, whistling nonchalantly, as he perpetrated one prank after another. In offering an explanation of his music, Strauss singled out two motives "which, in the most manifold disguises, moods, and situations, pervade the whole up to the catastrophe when, after he has been condemned to death, Till is strung up to a gibbet." The first motive appears at the very opening of the work, serving much the same function as the *Once upon a time* phrase that opens a fairy story. (This theme is also heard at the very end of the work, after Till's hanging, as if to round out the tale by reminding the hearer that "Once upon a time there was a rogue named Till.") The second subject, for horn, suggests the prankish Till, and is of roguish character.

Wilhelm Mauke provided the following detailed program for the tone poem: "Once upon a time there was a prankish rogue, ever up to new tricks, named Till Eulenspiegel. Now he jumps on his horse and gallops into the midst of a crowd of market-women, overturning their wares with a prodigious clatter. Now he lights out with seven-league boots; now conceals himself in a mousehole. Disguised as a priest, he 'drips with unction and morals,' yet out of his toe peeps the scamp. As cavalier he makes love, at first in jest, but soon in earnest, and is rebuffed. He is furious, and swears vengeance on all mankind, but, meeting some 'philistines' he forgets his wrath and mocks them. At length his hoaxes fail. He is tried in a Court of Justice, and is condemned to hang for his misdeeds; but he still whistles defiantly as he ascends the ladder. Even on the scaffold he jests. Now he swings; he gasps for air; a last convulsion. Till is dead."

Incidentally, although Strauss destroys Till at the gallows, the legend itself is more merciful, allowing Till, thanks to his wits, to escape punishment.

*Till Eulenspiegel* was composed in 1895 and performed for the first time in Cologne, under the baton of the composer, on November 5, 1895.

Recommended recording: V-DV1 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

## SONGS

Richard Strauss inherited the mantle of Hugo Wolf; certainly, his romantic ardor and his lyric inventiveness have made him one of the greatest *Lied* composers of all time. He wrote about one hundred and forty songs, and of these about two dozen are genuine masterpieces. They include: *Cäcilie*, *Morgen*, *Traum durch die Dämmerung*, *Allerseelen*, *Ständchen*, *Heimliche Aufforderung*, *Ich trage meine Minne*, *Frühlingsfeier*, *Die Nacht*, *Ruhe*, *meine Seele*, *Zueignung*, etc.

His songs are often tender and haunting in their beauty, obviously composed in the white heat of inspiration. Exquisite cameos, they are perfect in every detail, are all of a piece, and have the permanency of all things beautiful. "In the manner of Wagner and Hugo Wolf," wrote Karl Geiringer, "he placed the principal emphasis on the particularly expressive treatment of the accompaniment. Yet the voice part is often characterized by an unusually expansive range. Many of his songs are technical masterpieces of great *élan* and imagination."

Recommended recordings: *Allerseelen*, V-1726 (Flagstad); *Cäcilie*, V-1853 (Melchior); *Heimliche Aufforderung*, V-1853 (Melchior); *Morgen*, V-1795 (Szantho); *Ruhe*, *meine Seele*, V-17480 (Schlusnus); *Ständchen*, V-7707 (Elisabeth Schumann); *Traum durch die Dämmerung*, V-1930 (Janssen); *Zueignung*, V-1853 (Melchior).

## SYMPHONY

*Sinfonia Domestica*

In New York City, in 1904, a festival week was devoted to the music of Richard Strauss, during which Strauss himself directed the Hermann Wetzler orchestra in programs of his own music. The festival was marked by the world première of his *Sinfonia Domestica*, Op. 53 (played on March 21).

Kalisch and Pitt have made a useful analysis of this symphony. "The symphony is concerned with three main themes, that of the husband, that of the wife, and that of the child. The husband theme is divided into three sections, the first of which is marked "*gemächlich*" (easy-going), the second, "*sinnend*" (meditative), and the third "*feurig*" (fiery).

"The first section of the symphony, the introduction, is devoted to an exposition and treatment of the chief theme, or group of themes, its most striking feature being the introduction of the child theme on the oboe d'amore, an instrument which has practically fallen out of use. The composer himself has spoken of this theme as being of almost 'Haydnesque simplicity.' On this follows a very characteristic passage, which has been interpreted as representing the child in its bath. The scherzo bears the headings: '*Elternglück—kindliche Spiel*' (Parents' Happiness—the Child at Play). Its chief theme is the child theme in a new rhythm. At its end the music suggestive of the bath recurs, and the clock strikes seven. We then come to the lullaby, where we

have another version of the child theme. The subheadings of the Adagio are: 'Schaffen und Schauen—Liebeszene—Träume und Sorgen' (Doing and Observing—Love Scene—Dreams and Cares). This elaborate section introduces no new themes of any importance, and is really a symphonic slow movement of great polyphonic elaboration and superlatively rich orchestral color. The gradual awakening of the family is next depicted by a change in the character of the music, which becomes more and more restless, the use of rhythmical variants of previous themes being very ingenious; then there is another reference to the bath music, and the Glockenspiel indicates that it is

7 A. M. . . .

"In this way we reach the final Fugue. The principal subject of this is also a new version of the child theme. Its subtitle is '*Lustiger Streit—Fröhlicher Beschluss*' (Merry Argument—Happy Resolution), the subject of the dispute between father and mother being the future of the son. . . . The father and mother, however, soon assume their former importance, and the whole ends with great spirit and in the highest good humor with an emphatic reassertion of the husband theme with which it began, suggesting that the father had the last word in the argument."

Recommended recording: VM-520 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy).

## STRAVINSKY

IGOR STRAVINSKY, b. Oranienbaum, Russia, 1882. After studying with Rimsky-Korsakov, he composed a symphony which was performed in 1908. One year later, Diaghilev, impresario of the Ballet Russe, became interested in him and had him prepare some music for the Ballet. Out of this association were to come Stravinsky's first masterpieces: *L'Oiseau de feu*, *Petrushka*, and *Le Sacre du Printemps*—works which were to make their composer one of the most controversial and publicized composers in the world of music. After leaving Russia permanently, Stravinsky settled first in Switzerland, then in France, and finally in the United States.

WHATEVER one thinks of Stravinsky in general, or of any of his works in particular, one cannot deny that he has been one of the most influential figures in the music of the twentieth century. Perhaps no other single composer of our time has so impressed his own identity and creative manner on composers everywhere. The force and strength of his personality have been so powerful that, in whichever direction he has chosen to go, he has carried with him most other modern composers as well.

There are two distinct periods in Stravinsky's career. The first—the one whose significance can no longer be questioned—is the "Russian." Influenced

profoundly by Russian culture, background, and folklore (and inspired by his teacher Rimsky-Korsakov) he wrote music with an unmistakably Russian accent. This is the period in which he worked for Diaghilev, and it produced his most famous works. Though obsessed with the Russian past, Stravinsky was in these works essentially the composer of the future—a bold and fearless innovator in the use of harmony, rhythm, and melody. The accepted laws he shattered, as he explored new ways of saying things. His was a new world of music and (because he was a man of genius) a world of great beauty and imagination.

Then, suddenly, Stravinsky abandoned the idiom and style which had made him famous. After *Les Noces*, the ruthless revolutionary looked to the distant past for his models and for his esthetic philosophy. New worlds of sound no longer intrigued him. He now preferred to flatter the masters of the past through imitation. "Stravinsky . . . succumbed to the eighteenth century," as Lawrence Gilman wrote. "He saw himself, it was evident, as the initiator of the private Renaissance."

In this new classical idiom—in which Stravinsky made a fetish of simplicity—he wrote his concertos for piano and violin, the *Capriccio*, the *Oedipus Rex*, the *Symphony of Psalms*, *Apollo Musagètes*, *Perséphone*, etc. There are those who regard this neo-classic phase as Stravinsky's greatest period, the final evolution of a great creative artist who has now found his purest and most perfect expression. Others regard the new simplicity as ingenuous, the preoccupation with the past as artificial. Though the controversy over the value of Stravinsky's neo-classicism began many years ago, it has not abated—each side being convinced of its rightness. But the truth is that there is rightness on both sides. Stravinsky *has* sacrificed his one-time power and intensity and originality for the sake of lucidity; in comparison with his more recent works, the earlier masterpieces seem red-blooded, filled with an inexhaustible energy and vitality. But Stravinsky's new period is not a mere pose. It is the result of profound convictions and of a natural artistic growth. His language has become more precise and exact; his speech has often achieved nobility; his thinking is clear. And, as in the past so in the present, he is a consummate master of all musical resources.

## BALLETS

### *L'Oiseau de Feu*

In one act and two scenes, book by Michel Fokine, introduced by the Ballet Russe at the Théâtre Nationale de l'Opéra in Paris on June 25, 1910.

In 1909, Diaghilev heard two early works of Stravinsky: *Scherzo fantastique* and *Feu d'artifice*. With his uncanny flair for detecting genius in the raw, Diaghilev realized that the composer of this music had latent powers, and he decided to exploit them. Diaghilev's first commission from Stravinsky was the orchestration of two Chopin pieces to be used in a ballet called *Chopin-*

iana. Several months after this, Diaghilev gave Stravinsky his first major assignment. He had been planning to convert the old Russian legend of the Fire-Bird into a ballet, and had hoped to ask Liadov to write the music. At the last moment, however, he decided to assign the task to Stravinsky.

During the late winter of 1909 and early spring of 1910 Stravinsky worked on the *Fire-Bird*, his first major musical endeavor, frequently in close collaboration with Fokine, who wrote the libretto. "They worked . . . phrase by phrase," wrote Lincoln Kirstein. "Stravinsky brought him a beautiful cantilena on the entrance of the Tsarevitch into the garden of the girls with the golden apples. But Fokine disapproved. 'No, no!' he said. 'You bring him in like a tenor. Break the phrase where he merely shows his head on his first intrusion. Then make the curious swish of the garden's magic horse's return, and then, when he shows his head again, bring in the full swing of the melody.'"

By May 1910 the score was completed, and on June 25, it was introduced at the Opéra. The principal dancers included Fokine, Fokina, and Karsavina; the settings were designed by Bakst and Golovine. The conductor was Pierné.

The scenario of the ballet follows the traditional legend closely. Ivan Tsarevitch captures the Fire-Bird who, in reward for his release, offers one of his glowing feathers. Suddenly the darkness is dissipated, and a castle comes into view, in front of which are thirteen girls of incomparable beauty. They play with the golden fruit from the nearby silver tree. One of the girls sees Ivan and gives him one of the apples, after which all the girls dance out of sight. Ivan suddenly realizes that the castle is the abode of the dreaded Kastchei who brings travelers under his spell. He enters the castle determined to conquer this monster. Kastchei tries to bewitch Ivan, but fails because of the magic feather Ivan holds in his hand. The Fire-Bird then reveals to Ivan a casket in which Kastchei's fate is hidden. Ivan opens the casket, and finding an egg therein smashes it to the ground. Kastchei perishes, and the castle disappears. The captive maidens are released from their slavery and one of them is given to Ivan in marriage.

*L'Oiseau de feu* was an instantaneous success; but more important still it placed Stravinsky for the first time in the vanguard of modern composers. Overnight he had stepped from formalism to independence, from imitation to self-assertiveness. Debussy, who stood backstage during the performance, embraced Stravinsky and kissed him, because Debussy realized that in the younger man his own successor had come.

With *L'Oiseau de feu*, Stravinsky was well on his way towards formulating his own style. In comparison with later works, *L'Oiseau* may today appear lyrical and conservative. But in 1910 it was brazen and audacious. Together with an often tender melody, there was a rhythmic barbarism (Dance of the Kastchei) in which conventions were swept to the winds. Stravinsky's later

characteristic instrumentation, as luminous as flame, and his recognizable melodic line with its brusque leaps and starts were already in evidence.

In 1919, Stravinsky adapted some of the most important musical numbers from the ballet into a symphonic suite which has since become extraordinarily successful. The concert suite includes six sections which highlight the most important moments in the ballet. For this reason, it is advisable to read the story of the ballet before hearing the suite, for which it serves as an admirably illuminating program. The six sections are: I. Introduction: Kastchei's Enchanted Garden and Dance of the Fire-Bird; II. Supplication of the Fire-Bird; III. The Princesses Play with the Golden Apples; IV. Dance of the Princess, and Berceuse; V. Infernal Dance of All the Subjects of Kastchei; VI. Finale.

Recommended recording: VM-933 (NBC Symphony—Stokowski).

### *Petrushka*

In one act and four scenes, book by Igor Stravinsky and Alexandre Benois, first performed by the Ballet Russe at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris on June 13, 1911.

In an attempt to relax after composing *L'Oiseau de feu*, Stravinsky decided to write a work of lighter character. At first, he thought of calling this new ballet *Konzertstück*, but he soon discarded this title as too undescriptive. Eventually, he came upon the idea of adapting his music for *Petrushka*, the puppet so familiar at Russian fairs. Once this subject occurred to him, the music progressed swiftly. In 1911, Diaghilev visited Stravinsky to hear about the new work and as he listened to the music he knew that here was material for a brilliant Ballet Russe number. The Stravinsky score was completed in 1911, and on June 13 of the same year it was introduced with Karsavina and Nijinsky as the principal dancers. Benois painted the scenery; Fokine was ballet-master; and Pierre Monteux was the conductor.

The scenario of *Petrushka* was prepared by Alexandre Benois. "This ballet depicts the life of the lower classes in Russia with all its dissoluteness, barbarity, tragedy, and misery. *Petrushka* is a sort of Polichinelle, a poor hero always suffering from the cruelty of the police and every kind of wrong and unjust persecution. This represents symbolically the whole tragedy in the existence of the Russian people, suffering under despotism and injustice. The scene is laid in the midst of the Russian carnival, and the streets are lined with booths in one of which *Petrushka* plays a kind of humorous role. He is killed, but he appears again as a ghost on the roof of the booth to frighten his enemy, his old employer, an allusion to the despotic rule in Russia."

*Petrushka* established Stravinsky's fame. He was now the prophet of the music of the future. His name was linked with the rising futurist movement: in Rome, Marinetti carried a banner in the streets proclaiming: "Down



with Wagner! Long live Stravinsky!" To young art-lovers, chafing under the bondage of formalism and tradition, *Petrushka*—with its new flavors—spelled full emancipation. As Guido Pannain wrote: "*Petrushka* fell like a meteor upon the comfortable Strauss-dominated musical world of the pre-war twentieth century. The triumphant crystal-clear technique he displayed in this ballet was like a flash of light in a murky wilderness. The harmonies and the rhythms of the dance music created a dramatic atmosphere which fermented, which quivered with suppressed energy."

In an adaptation of some of the music into a symphonic suite, since become outstandingly successful, Stravinsky included the following sections from the ballet: Carnival; The Magician; Russian Dance; *Petrushka*; The Arab; Dance of the Ballerina; Carnival; Nurses' Dance; The Bear and the Peasant Playing a Hand-Organ; The Merchant and the Gypsies; The Dance of the Coachmen and the Grooms; The Masqueraders; The Quarrel of the Arab and *Petrushka*; the Death of *Petrushka*.

Recommended recording: VM-574 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

### *Le Sacre du Printemps*

In two acts, book by Igor Stravinsky and Nicolas Roerich, introduced at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris on May 29, 1913.

It is now history how the first performance of Stravinsky's third great ballet, *Le Sacre du printemps*, was one of the greatest scandals of our times. The music had not progressed more than a few minutes before snickers, guffaws, and loud protests began to fill the air. As Carl Van Vechten described the scene: "A certain part of the audience was thrilled by what it considered to be a blasphemous attempt to destroy music as an art and, swept away with wrath, began, very soon after the rise of the curtain, to make cat-calls, and to offer audible suggestions as to how the performance should proceed. The orchestra played unheard except occasionally, when a slight lull occurred. The young man seated behind me in a box stood up during the course of the ballet to enable him to see more clearly. The intense excitement under which he was laboring betrayed itself when he began to beat rhythmically on the top of my head with his fists."

And the uproar continued to grow in intensity. A lady rose in her box to slap the face of a man nearby who was hissing. Saint-Saëns denounced the composer as a faker, and so did the critic André Capu; Ravel, on the other hand, was crying that it was the work of a genius. The Austrian ambassador was laughing loudly with derision, and Florent Schmitt was attacking him for his stupidity. The Princess de Pourtalès rose haughtily from her seat and exclaimed: "I am sixty years old, but this is the first time that anyone has dared to make a fool of me!" Through it all Claude Debussy pleaded pathetically to the audience to keep quiet so that they might hear the wonderful music.

The scandal is a thing of the past, remembered only as a historical curiosity.

The music of *Le Sacre* remains, one of the most wondrous things produced by our generation, and one of the most original.

Stravinsky began work on *Le Sacre* immediately after completing *Petrushka*, though he had conceived the idea for it two years before the writing of *Petrushka*. As he himself recorded: "One day, when I was finishing the last pages of *L'Oiseau de feu* in St. Petersburg, I had a fleeting vision which came to me as a complete surprise, my mind at the moment being full of other things. I saw in imagination a solemn pagan rite: sage elders, seated in a circle, watched a young girl dance herself to death. They were sacrificing her to propitiate the god of Spring. Such was the theme of the *Sacre du printemps*. I must confess that this vision made a deep impression upon me and I at once described it to my friend, Nicolas Roerich, he being a painter who had specialized in pagan subjects. He welcomed my inspiration with enthusiasm, and became my collaborator in this creation."

Despite the cataclysmic reception given to *Le Sacre* at its first performance, Stravinsky remained confident of the importance of the music; and his confidence was finally justified. In London, in 1913, the ballet met a warmer reception, while a symphonic performance of the music in Paris in 1914 was unquestionably successful. Today, of course, we accept what Cecil Gray wrote in 1929: "*Le Sacre* is one of the most conspicuous landmarks in the artistic life of our period."

"Stravinsky is a barbarian who has been trained in the school of pure form in art," wrote Guido Pannain. "*Le Sacre du printemps* is the hymn of his innate barbarism. His musical sense, like that of all primitives, is founded on movement, which is to say, rhythm. Melody, so far as he brings himself to indulge in it, is always translated throughout his work into a witty and spirited system of punctuation. Study the opening of *Le Sacre*, gentle and springlike in its freshness, until the sudden change comes to a bitter mood expressed by stiff angular phrases. Stravinsky's pathos comes from an aggressive melodic idiom, which reaches its acme of development in this primitive and orgiastic work, a savage song of the earth's cruelty and mercy. But it holds pages of magnificent poetry."

Boris de Schloezer makes an important distinction between *Le Sacre* and its predecessor, *Petrushka*. "The themes of *Petrushka* are not of peasant, village, or strongly Russian origin; it is the music of the inhabitants of the cities . . . who have already assimilated Western musical culture. . . . *Le Sacre* is of a different inspiration—and Stravinsky shows here for the first time a melodic and rhythmic invention even more original: some of the themes of *Le Sacre* are borrowed from the peasant folk lore of North Russia, where old musical traditions have been best preserved; other themes belong to the composer, who created them after the original models, as Glinka almost always did—themes that are inspired by the popular melodies but never copy them."

The work is now best known through its performance at symphony concerts. It is divided into two sections: I. The Adoration of the Earth (Introduction; Harbingers of Spring; Dance of the Adolescents; Spring Rounds; Games of the Round Cities; The Procession of the Wise Men; the Adoration of the Earth; Dance of the Earth); II. The Sacrifice (Introduction; Mysterious Circles of the Adolescents; Glorification of the Chosen One; Evocation of the Ancestors; Ritual of the Ancestors; The Sacrificial Dance of the Chosen One).

Recommended recording: CM-417 (New York Philharmonic—Stravinsky).

## CHORAL MUSIC

### *Symphonies des Psaumes*

Stravinsky composed this setting of three psalms, for chorus and orchestra—"to the glory of God"—on a commission by the Boston Symphony Orchestra for its fiftieth anniversary season. The world première, however, took place not in Boston, but in Brussels by the Brussels Philharmonic under Ernst Ansermet on December 13, 1930. In the score, the composer appended the following: "The three parts of this symphony are to be played without pause. The text of the Psalms, which is that of the Vulgate, is to be sung in Latin. The Psalms are Verses 13 and 14 of XXXVIII for the First Part of the Symphony; verses 2, 3, and 4 of XXXIX for the Second Part; Psalm CL, in its entirety, for the Third Part. The chorus should be children's voices. Failing these, women's voices (sopranos and altos) may be substituted."

In his autobiography, the composer explained the form and content of this work with the following description: "I wished to create an organic entity without conforming to the different schemes long adopted; rather to give my piece a periodic order such as that which distinguishes the symphony from the suite as merely a succession of pieces in varied order. At the same time, I considered the resources of sound from which I was to build my edifice. As I saw it, my symphony must rely mainly upon contrapuntal development, and for that I had to enlarge the means at my disposition. I decided upon a choral and instrumental combination in which the two elements should be given an equal prominence. In this, my point of view coincided with that of the old masters of counterpoint, who neither reduced the function of the chorus to a mere homophonic voice, nor reduced the instrumental portion to an accompaniment."

"The juxtaposition of the three Psalms is not fortuitous," explains a program item in a French program. "The prayer of the sinner for divine pity (Prelude), the recognition of grace received (double fugue), and the hymn of praise and glory are the basis of an evolutionary plan. The music which follows these texts follows its development according to its own symphonic laws."

Recommended recording: CM-162 (Vlasoff Chorus, Orchestra—Stravinsky).

## OPERA-ORATORIO

*Oedipus Rex*

Stravinsky combined elements of both the opera and the oratorio in his *Oedipus Rex*, in two acts, the text of Jean Cocteau drawn from the famous drama of Sophocles. "I had in mind," explained the composer, "an opera or an oratorio on some universally familiar subject. My idea was that I could thus concentrate the whole attention of the audience, undistracted by the story, on the music itself, which would thus become both word and action. . . . For two months I was in constant touch with Cocteau. He was delighted with my idea, and set to work at once. We were in complete agreement in choosing *Oedipus Rex* as the subject. We kept our plans secret, wishing to give Diaghilev a surprise for the twentieth anniversary of his theatrical activities, which was to be celebrated in the spring of 1927. . . . During the rest of the summer and the following autumn [1926] I hardly stirred from home, being entirely absorbed by my work on *Oedipus*. The more deeply I went into the matter the more I was confronted by the problem of style in all its seriousness. . . . Just as Latin, no longer being a language in everyday use, imposed a certain style on me, so the language of the music itself imposed a certain convention which would be able to keep it within strict bounds and prevent it from overstepping them and wandering into byways, in accordance with those whims of the author which are often so perilous. . . . This it was that induced me to use the anodyne and impersonal formulas of a remote period and to apply them largely in my opera-oratorio, *Oedipus*, to the austere and solemn character to which they specially lent themselves. I finished the score on March 14, 1927. . . . As we were too short both of time and funds to present *Oedipus Rex* in a stage setting, it was decided to give it in concert form." This took place at the Sarah Bernhardt Theater in Paris on May 30, 1927 under the composer's direction. As a stage production, *Oedipus* was introduced at the Kroll Opera in Berlin under the baton of Otto Klemperer in February, 1928.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

(For the orchestral suites *L'Oiseau de feu*, *Petrushka*, and *Le Sacre du printemps*, see above: Ballets.)

*Capriccio*

Stravinsky composed the *Capriccio*, for piano and orchestra in 1928-29 and it was introduced by the Orchestre Symphonique de Paris on December 6, 1929, Ansermet conducting, and the composer performing the solo piano part.

It is a light and witty work with overtones of irony, divided into three movements: I. Presto; II. Andante rapsodico; III. Allegro capriccioso, *ma tempo giusto*. He called the work a *capriccio* (rather than a concerto) be-

cause that name seemed "to indicate best the character of the music. I had in mind the definition of a capriccio given by Praetorius, the celebrated musical authority of the seventeenth century. He regarded it as meaning a fantasia—a free form made up of fugate instrumental passages. This form enabled me to develop my music by the juxtaposition of episodes of various kinds which follow one another and by their nature give the piece that aspect of caprice from which it takes its name."

Recommended recording: VM-685 (Sanromá; Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

## SULLIVAN

SIR ARTHUR SEYMOUR SULLIVAN, b. London, 1842. Studied under Goss and Sterndale Bennett at the Royal Academy of Music and at the Leipzig Conservatory under Moscheles and Richter. He began his career as a composer of serious works, including an *Irish Symphony* performed in 1866. At the same time he held important posts as organist and conductor. His first effort in a comic vein was *Cox and Box*, performed in 1867. However, it was not until he met and collaborated with William Schwenck Gilbert as librettist that Sullivan came into his own as a composer of comic operas. Their first joint work was *Thespis*, but it was not until *Trial by Jury* (1875) that they hit their full stride. Thereafter they wrote one comic-opera masterpiece after another, and achieved with them worldwide fame. After the composition of *The Gondoliers* a rupture took place between the collaborators which, though momentarily cemented in 1893, eventually sent each one in a separate direction. Sullivan returned to serious composition, expending great effort and care on an opera, *Ivanhoe*, which was a failure. He died in London in 1900.

IT is one of the curious paradoxes of Sullivan's career—a paradox worthy of one of his comic operas—that though he looked upon his serious music as his major contribution and his comic operas as hack-work, it is his comic-opera music, and not his more serious efforts, which has earned him immortality. What Percy Fitzgerald wrote of Sullivan's oratorios applies as well to his opera, symphony, and tone poems: they are "excellent scholarly works, but they seem to lack inspiration and are academical in style and treatment." But in his comic operas he dropped his academic robes, and was sprightly, infectious, witty, and fresh. He had a touch of his own—and that touch was unmistakable. He recognized the fact, as Cecil Forsyth pointed out, "that it was not only necessary to set his text to music which was pleasing in itself, but to invent melodies in such close alliance with the words that the two things become indistinguishable. . . . In this respect, Sullivan did more for the English stage than any musician of his time."

Sullivan is never the experimenter or innovator in his music. "He used no harmonies that composers before him had not used over and over again,"

remarked Thomas F. Dunhill. "His melodies were perfectly proportioned in an orthodox way, and he seldom attempted to arrest our attention by oddities of shape or rhythm. His orchestration, skilful and pat as it invariably is, was never in the least degree experimental. And yet, within such circumscribed limits, his art is always recognizable for its personal quality."

## OPERETTAS

In analyzing the scores which Sullivan wrote for Gilbert's librettos, Dunhill points out the following five characteristics of Sullivan's style: (1) avoidance of any manufactured music; (2) unpretentiousness; (3) unaffected simplicity and striking lucidity; (4) sense of humor and satire which "almost invariably are coexistent with a sense of beauty"; (5) genius "for abounding provision of good melodies."

Though only *The Mikado* is here discussed, several other Gilbert and Sullivan comic operas are hardly less distinguished. Of special significance are *Pinafore* (1878), an acid travesty on English naval affairs and officialdom (its phenomenal success in America can be said to have given birth to the American comic-opera); *The Pirates of Penzance* (1879); which had its world première in New York City; *Patience* (1881), a vitriolic attack on estheticism in general, and on Oscar Wilde in particular; *Iolanthe* (1882), a mischievous poke at British peerdom; *Ruddigore* (1887), a satire on English melodrama; *The Yeoman of the Guard* (1888), and *The Gondoliers* (1889).

### *The Mikado*

In two acts, book by William S. Gilbert, first performed at the Savoy Theater in London on March 14, 1882.

In the Knightsbridge section of London, a miniature Japanese village (a faithful reproduction of the real thing) was set up. Londoners flocked to this village to gape at the geishas, to drink tea, and to admire the exotic settings. Thus London became Japan-conscious, and Gilbert with them. In his studio, one day, a Japanese sword hanging on the wall fell at his feet; and as he picked it up, he thought of the appeal of the Japanese village in the heart of London, and the idea occurred to him that Japan might be a fitting locale for an operetta plot. The story then came to him quickly—the typical Gilbert theme of a topsy-turvy world, but with its settings and costumes Japanese.

Nanki-Poo, son of the Mikado, escapes from the royal palace to avoid marrying the ugly Katisha who is the Mikado's choice for him. Disguised as a wandering minstrel, he arrives at the town of Titipu, and there falls in love with the beautiful Yum-Yum. Yum-Yum, however, is coveted by her ward Ko-Ko, the Lord High Executioner. In despair, Nanki-Poo wants to commit suicide. But Ko-Ko makes a pact with him: since, as Executioner, Ko-Ko needs a victim very badly (otherwise his office may be abolished), he promises Nanki-Poo that he may have Yum-Yum as a bride for a month if in return Nanki-Poo promises to let himself be beheaded at the end of that time. Nanki-Poo consents eagerly, and he is

married to his beloved. Eventually, of course, the Mikado arrives and Nanki-Poo, the Mikado's son, does not have to live up to his bargain. Ko-Ko, instead, takes Katisha for himself.

"The music throughout is neatly characterized," wrote Isaac Goldberg. "Poo-Bah's address to Nanki-Poo, 'Young man, despair,' is melodically the very signature of the fellow's hollow pomp. The appearance of the three little maids and their train is set to melodies and accompaniments that are as different from the musical investiture of Pooh-Bah and Ko-Ko as are their respective costumes. Sullivan, at his best, had the happy knack of turning his orchestral background into what might be called tonal scenery."

Recommended recording: VM-C26 (D'Oyly Carte Opera Company—Godfrey).

## SZYMANOWSKI

KAROL SZYMANOWSKI, b. Timashovka, Ukraine, Poland, 1883. After studying with Neuhaus and Noskowski he went to Berlin where he became active in a movement to bring Polish music to the attention of the music world. Returning to his native land, Szymanowski became remarkably productive as a composer. He went to Warsaw late in 1919 and settled there, becoming professor at the Conservatory in 1922 and its director in 1926. Towards the close of his life, illness sent him into a sanitarium in Lausanne, Switzerland, where he died in 1937.

KAROL SZYMANOWSKI was the foremost modern composer of Poland. Joseph Marx analyzed Szymanowski's style as a "strong individual sense of melodic expression, and a capacity for sensitive differentiations of feelings. One of the most striking features of his style is his scintillating harmony. Another is the flowing, ever-imaginative polyphony."

"He inclines towards the Oriental," wrote Erwin Felber, "and in his large and very diversified output there are many purely Polish features. He is sensitive and unrestrained, and has no use for high-sounding slogans. He stands alone, a belated romanticist who longs for peace. Sedulous, careless of passing fashions, he remains true to himself and preserves the heritage of the dying art of expression. So that in a way he is a modern although outside his time: he carries the death-dream of romanticism to the border of awakening."

### CONCERTO

#### *Violin Concerto No. 2*

Szymanowski wrote with originality and effect for the violin. Of his style for that instrument, Jachimecki wrote: "The technique of these works [the

compositions for violin] opens up new paths in the field of composition. Well acquainted with a famous violin virtuoso near whom he lived, Szymanowski picked up all the secrets of technique, often the result of an improvised exercise, of an involuntary movement of the fingers or of an unintentioned gliding of the bow. These factors Szymanowski elaborated into a marvelous system, incomparably richer than the whole school of virtuosity as we knew it hitherto. The most brilliant effects in Paganini's concertos and caprices are left far behind. We can say this of Szymanowski's technique, in itself an evidence of creative genius, that it transcends by far the dreams of the best violin virtuosos of our times. Its effects are founded on the most fantastic harmonics, an inexhaustible variety of spiccato, of chords and double-stoppings, a truly resplendent palette of colors."

Szymanowski's second concerto, Op. 61, was dedicated to the virtuoso Paul Kochanski, who introduced it in Warsaw, with the Warsaw Philharmonic, in 1933.

Alfred H. Meyer has provided the following discerning analysis of this concerto: "[It] proceeds uninterruptedly as a single movement. This movement, however, is divided into two distinct parts by an intervening cadenza (written by Paul Kochanski). The first part begins *Moderato molto tranquillo*. After a few bars of prelude, the solo violin introduces the principal theme. . . . Then the solo violin introduces the second theme. . . . The two themes are then treated alternately. From this point the mood shifts as indicated by the tempo indications, *Très rythmé*, considerably later to *Andante sostenuto*, then more quickly to an *Animato* on the way to an *Appassionato*. When this subsides the music passes at once to the cadenza. . . . After the cadenza the tempo is *Allegramente molto energico*."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Symphonie Concertante*

Szymanowski composed his *Symphonie Concertante* for piano and orchestra (Op. 60) in 1932 and it was introduced by the Warsaw Philharmonic in May 1933, with the composer at the piano, and Gregory Fitelberg conducting the orchestra.

The work is in three movements: *Moderato*; *Andante molto sostenuto*; *Allegro non troppo*. "It should not be mistaken for a piano concerto in the ordinary sense," wrote Herbert Elwell, "for the solo instrument, in spite of numerous difficulties requiring a virtuoso technique, does not predominate. Rather the orchestra and piano alternate in taking the principal role, the piano being at times subordinated to a mere obbligato. . . . This brilliant composition owes its inspiration primarily to the folk spirit of [Szymanowski's] native land, and it vibrates generously with the robust, vivacious temper of the Polish mountaineers. While none of the themes appear to be literal translations of Polish folk tunes, they have, nevertheless, a highly indigenous



character and evoke a rural atmosphere from which the wit and sentiment of a simple carefree people speak with singular potency. Though the rhythms are often terse and the dissonances biting, they seem to emanate . . . into genial peaceful moods, producing an impression not of conflict and distortion, but of organic growth and healthy liberation of energy."

## PIANO MUSIC

Szymanowski wrote brilliantly for the piano, his most frequently heard works including the *Metopes*, Op. 29; the *Etudes*, Op. 33; the *Masques*, Op. 34; and the *Mazurkas*, Op. 50.

"In his compositions for piano," wrote Guido Pannain, "one finds many examples of rich and varied tonalities, embodying a profound and many-sided instrumental genius. In the art of writing for the piano Szymanowski reveals a lively orchestral sensibility. . . . All the elements characteristic of his talents in perfect fusion are seen here—harmonious colors, transcendental virtuosity, and melodic richness.

"Under the title *Metopes* three pieces are found together—"The Island of the Sirens,' 'Calypso,' and 'Nausicaa.' Together they form an Hellenic reminiscence of a strangely subtle grace. The suave and delicate pages of the *Odyssey* have informed the cultured imagination of this sensualist of the twentieth century, and created the velvety and strangely voluptuous arpeggios of the 'Island of the Sirens,' the dreamy melancholy of the 'Calypso,' and the delicious dancing motion of 'Nausicaa.' The composer's senses are stirred by a voluptuous innocence in the youthful game of the maidens on the Island of the Phaeaceans.

"[Of] the three *Masques* . . . the 'Don Juan Serenade' is especially noteworthy. It begins with much spirit and bravado, with flourishing arpeggios on a guitar. Then, from the secret corners of the heart comes a bitter echo of melancholy. Laughter and tears melt before our eyes into sorrow and buffoonery. It is difficult to find in contemporary piano music anything more ardent than this, music more closely packed and agile, more vigorous in its timbre, or more convincing in its humanity.

"In the *Mazurkas* . . . the spirit of the dance is pervaded by a subtle musical sense. The rhythm becomes lyrical, and essentially melodic. The insinuating harmonies in the development of the song become impregnated with fascinating, velvety attractiveness. A certain magic lurks in the air; the abandon of the rhythm recalls strangely the 'faery lands forlorn' of Chopin's first works."

Recommended recording: Twelve *Etudes*, Op. 33, CM-X189 (Gimpel); *Mazurkas*, Op. 50, Nos. 1 and 2, C-70746D (Gimpel).

## SONGS

Almost a third of Szymanowski's works are vocal, and his songs are among the most original expressions in contemporary literature for the voice. The best of them are included in the *Słowieńie* song-cycle, Op. 45; the *Children's Songs*, Op. 49; the *Hafis Songs*, Op. 24; the *Songs of the Fairy-Tale Princess*, Op. 31; and the *Songs of the Lovelorn Muezzin*, Op. 42.

"In most of these compositions," wrote H. H. Stuckenschmidt, "Szymanowski's lively interest in the East is not only outwardly perceptible, but shows itself as a profound and inward kinship with Oriental poetry and mythology. If his *Twelve Songs*, Op. 17, was inspired by German post-romantics . . . , his lyrical fancy was later engaged by Hafis and Rabindranath Tagore. His melody and rhythm too showed an ever-growing affinity with Arabic and Indian cultures. The asymmetrical meters and monotonous repetitions of Oriental dances as well as the augmented seconds and pentatonic ornaments of Asiatic music influenced his melodic invention more and more. Perhaps there is here some atavistic impulse beyond a mere personal taste for the exotic. Béla Bartók and Alois Haba have confirmed the hypothesis of comparative musicology that Slav folk-music derives from Arab sources. The Slav in Szymanowski may thus have unconsciously sought for prehistoric elements in the folk-music of his country long before he showed leanings towards the folk-song of the Tatra in his later works."

Discussing the *Słowieńie* cycle, Stuckenschmidt wrote: "The words of Julius Tuwim, shaped out of ancient Polish linguistic roots, have no strictly logical sequence. They are thus lyrics in the purest sense of the word, poetry of sheer mood proceeding from impressions of the countryside, and quite untranslatable, even to the title. Symbolic concepts form part of them, such as the 'red witch towers' of whose fires the maidens are warned to beware. Legendary features too are used, like that of the girl Wanda who sacrificed her life for Poland. Animals, flowers, the sun—all these and more appear in every conceivable association. Musically, Szymanowski succeeds here in establishing a unique synthesis of primitive and subtle elements. In spite of the simplest thematic figures, repeated with what seem but the minutest variants, the melodic line is rich in surprising diversity. The harmony, too, centered as a rule upon pedals, develops on the simplest foundations of dynamic and chromatic wealth, which makes the most daring combinations and permutations acceptable. The alpha and omega of this harmony is the tritone, from whose chordal ambiguity Szymanowski derives with great mastery all kinds of unexpected tensions and energies. Of the five songs the second is most significant in construction. Its lyric mood is derived from the contrast between a dark, silent wood and a sunny meadow."

# TANSMAN

ALEXANDER TANSMAN, b. Lodz, Poland, 1897. Studied in Warsaw under Rytel. Subsequently settled in Paris, where a concert devoted exclusively to his works first drew attention to his creative talent. In 1926 he began a series of tours as composer-pianist, and in 1932-33 he toured the world. After 1940 he settled permanently in the United States.

TANSMAN is one of the most gifted of Polish composers. Describing his style, Edward Lockspeiser wrote: "A lyric quality is one of his salient characteristics. His melodic inventiveness, particularly in the slow movements, has a warmth and sensitiveness which are truly his own; and it is in the *Lied* often employed by him for the andante in works of the sonata type, that his melodic gifts are severely tested."

He has been strongly influenced by native Polish music. "Tansman," wrote Irving Schwerké, "often finds recreation in the popular songs of Poland. . . . All that the folklore of his country can suggest is a melodic curve, a natural harmony; all that it contains is the very emotion of his race, which he has learned to capture and give expression to. Sometimes he avails himself of the rhythmic environment of Polish dances, such as the polka and the mazurka, transforming them into a scherzo or a trio."

## CONCERTO

### *Second Piano Concerto*

Tansman composed his Second Piano Concerto in 1927 and it was introduced by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Koussevitzky on December 29, 1928. The composer played the piano part. The work is dedicated to Charlie Chaplin.

The composer has authorized the following analysis of his concerto: "It is conceived in the classic mould with some modifications in the Development construction. The first part is cast in sonata form, the second in *Lied* form, the third in rondo form. The piano is treated as a concerted instrument, its characteristic timbre being utilized occasionally as an orchestral color. . . . The concerto is marked by pronounced lyricism; elements of Polish folk music play an important part, particularly in the Scherzo.

"The first movement begins with a vivacious and rhythmic theme. After a short development section comes a graceful episode which leads to the second theme, introduced by the piano and taken over by the clarinet. A recapitulation of the thematic material, in which several themes are superimposed, is followed by a short coda, and the movement ends with a lively upward sweep. The Scherzo is a kind of a perpetual motion, in which the orchestra weaves light designs against a ground of piano arabesques. The trio is in the form of a slow mazurka, the theme of which is voiced by the oboe. The Lento opens with a berceuse over a mobile pedal-point of tonic and dominant; the melody

is then taken by the orchestra, which introduces the second theme over a harmonic progression of the piano. The movement ends pianissimo and passes directly into the finale, the theme of which is announced by three trumpets. The theme is taken over by the piano in a strongly rhythmic fashion. After a very concise contrapuntal exposition a cadenza brings back the theme, and the work closes with a powerful climax."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Four Polish Dances*

Here, even more noticeably than in many of his other works, does Tansman reveal the influence exerted upon him by Polish national music. The work was composed in 1931 and was introduced at a Pasedeloup Concert on December 12, 1933, with Rhené-Baton conducting. The four Dances include the following: I. Polka; II. Kujawiak; III. Dumka; IV. Oberek.

The Polka is vigorous and full of folk color. The Kujawiak is slower and more sedate and has the character of a slow mazurka. The Dumka is elegiac in character (see Dvořák: Dumky Trio). And the Oberek is a fast mazurka. The four dances are brilliant orchestrally, ingenious in their use of rhythmic resources.

### *Triptyque*

In 1931, Tansman composed a set of three "panels" for string quartet which was introduced by the Brosa String Quartet in Paris. Feeling, however, that the work lent itself to a larger ensemble, he adapted it for chamber orchestra, and in this form (in which it is now best known) it was introduced by the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra on November 6, 1931. The work is, as its name connotes, in three sections: I. Allegro risoluto, marked by sharp rhythmic writing, with two principal melodic subjects of sharp accentuations; II. Andante, presenting a rather somber subject which is developed fugally and which is then brought to a moving climax; III. Presto, which is in the nature of a perpetual motion, and concludes with a theme hymn-like in character.

Recommended recording: CM-X47 (St. Louis Symphony—Golschmann).

# TARTINI

GIUSEPPE TARTINI, b. Pirano, Italy, 1692. He was intended first for a clerical career, then for law, but music proved too strong an influence in his life, and he soon turned to it exclusively. He began composing early, and in 1713 produced the work by which he is best known, the *Devil's Trill Sonata*. In 1715, he became a violinist in the San Antonio Church in his native city. By 1716, his fame as a violinist became so great that he was invited to Venice to enter into a competition with Veracini, famous Italian violinist. Tartini performed first and gave such a remarkable demonstration that Veracini discreetly withdrew from the contest. In 1721 Tartini became musical leader of the San Antonio Church in Padua, and seven years later he established in that city his celebrated violin school. He died in Padua in 1770.

TARTINI was Corelli's successor in the development of music for the violin. He was one of the greatest violinists of his time, and influenced violin playing considerably both in the development of digital technique and bowing, and in his introduction of thicker strings and lighter bow. Most important of his contributions were his voluminous works for the violin, which successfully carried on the traditions of Corelli. His concertos and sonatas for the violin brought the art of writing for that instrument to new artistic stages. As Arthur M. Abell wrote: "He built upon the foundation laid by his great predecessor, Corelli, but . . . he greatly enlarged upon his models. He employed broader and more pregnant themes, while his passage work reveals organic development. Tartini understood the meaning of light and shade; his virtuoso passages stand out in bold contrast to the melodic passages, and they are not a mere collection of notes for the sake of variety, but they reveal a certain kinship to the whole structure."

## VIOLIN MUSIC

### *Devil's Trill Sonata*

Tartini's most famous work for the violin, and one which has maintained its popularity in the concert hall up to the present time, has been named "The Devil's Trill" for two reasons. One is the conspicuous use of trills throughout the work, sometimes to embellish the melodic line like pendant jewels, sometimes to enhance the climactic effect, sometimes as an integral part of the thematic context. The other reason lies in Tartini's own strange revelation of its origin: "One night in 1713 I dreamt that I had made a compact with the devil, who had promised to be at my service on all occasions. Everything succeeded. . . . At last I thought I would offer my violin to the devil, in order to discover what kind of musician he was, when to my great astonishment I heard him play a solo so singularly beautiful and with such superior taste and precision that it surpassed all the music I had ever heard or conceived in the whole course of my life. I was so overcome with my surprise and delight that I lost my power of breathing, and the violence of the sensation awoke me.

Instantly, I seized my violin in the hope of remembering some portion of what I had heard, but in vain! The work which this dream suggested, and which I wrote at that time, is doubtless the best of my compositions. I call it *The Devil's Trill Sonata*."

It is a work so teeming with lovely melodies in a crystal-clear form that it requires no analysis to be understood and appreciated. It is in four movements, which contrast slow and fast moods alternately. The opening movement is a beautiful Larghetto, a two-part song of tender emotion. A gay and crisp section follows, generously decorated by trills, after which a brief and deeply felt Grave leads to another fast section—sprightly music of staccato figures and trills. Another Grave passes on to the buoyant and spirited closing.

The form in which this sonata is most frequently heard today is in the arrangement by Fritz Kreisler.

Recommended recording: CM-X98 (Milstein).

## TAYLOR

DEEMS TAYLOR, b. New York City, 1885. He did not begin intensive study of music until after his graduation from New York University, and even then most of his study was from books and texts rather than teachers. In 1921 he became a music critic on the *New York World*, beginning a long and distinguished career as a commentator on music. He combined his journalistic activity with composing, writing several orchestral works that were successfully performed. In 1925, he gave up his newspaper work to devote himself exclusively to composition; it was then that he wrote his operas. Subsequently, he has achieved success over the radio as commentator on music and as master-of-ceremonies for variety entertainments.

ALTHOUGH Deems Taylor's music has been described as "synthetic and derived," having no striking identity of its own, and strongly influenced by several different composers, it is well written and neatly developed. He is not of the modern school, and he avoided experimentation and innovation even in a period when it was fashionable for a composer to indulge in these. He has always felt strongly that music should be a sincere and personal expression; and it cannot be denied that he writes as he feels, regardless of trends or fashions. He has a fine melodic inventiveness, and his music is invariably controlled by good taste. If he has created no new forms, he has enriched old ones. Romantic, emotional, beautifully constructed, his works are the product of a consummate musician and a fine artist, and they will continue to find an appreciative public.

## OPERAS

*The King's Henchman*

In three acts, libretto by Edna St. Vincent Millay, introduced at the Metropolitan Opera House, on February 17, 1927.

The première of Taylor's opera was widely publicized and proved to be an event of first importance in the musical life of New York during that season. In 1925, Taylor had been commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera Association to write an opera, and for this task he enlisted the collaboration of Edna St. Vincent Millay, the distinguished American poet. The combination of her drama and Taylor's music was extraordinarily successful. Lawrence Gilman called it "the best American opera we have ever heard," and described the music as "richly textured, mellifluous. . . . It is the writing of an expert craftsman, an artist of sensibility and warm responsiveness." The opera proved a favorite with Metropolitan audiences as well; in three seasons it was performed fourteen times—an unprecedented record for an American opera.

The plot bears a resemblance to that of *Tristan und Isolde*. In tenth-century England, King Eadgar is in love with the Devon princess, Aelfrida. The King sends his friend Aethelwold to press his suit. In Devonshire, Aethelwold falls asleep in a forest. Aelfrida enters, reciting an incantation that will bring her a lover. The incantation works its spell, and Aethelwold and Aelfrida become lovers. Subsequently, Aethelwold sends a messenger to King Eadgar to inform him that Aelfrida is too unattractive for him. The lovers are married. One day the news comes to Aethelwold that King Eadgar himself is arriving. At first, Aelfrida intends to make herself ugly when the King arrives; but finally decides to appear in her natural beauty. Remorseful over his treachery to his king, Aethelwold commits suicide.

The similarity to *Tristan* does not end with the libretto, for the music has obvious Wagnerian overtones, particularly in the use of the *Leit-motif* and in the luscious orchestration. But Mr. Taylor created no carbon copy of *Tristan*. What we have here is influence, not imitation. The music is Taylor's own, sensitive, refined, cultured, and with a real ability to express beauty through tones and sonorities.

Recommended recording: "Oh, Caesar! Great wert thou" and "Nay, Maccus, lay him down," V-8103 (Tibbett).

*Peter Ibbetson*

In three acts, libretto by Deems Taylor and Constance Collier, première at the Metropolitan Opera House on February 7, 1931.

The success of *The King's Henchman* inevitably led the Metropolitan Opera Association to commission its gifted composer to write a second opera. For this work, Taylor decided to utilize the famous novel of Du Maurier,

and in the writing of the libretto he collaborated with the famous actress, Constance Collier.

Peter, abused by a cruel uncle who has adopted him, finds escape from reality in dreams about his childhood. He returns to his birthplace, Passy, to revive memories of youth, and there meets his childhood playmate, Mary. Following this, Peter kills his uncle in a moment of blind anger and is sentenced to life imprisonment. Once again he finds escape in dreams, in which Mary visits him, and they revive memories of their childhood. Peter remains in prison for forty years. Then he learns of Mary's death, and he joins her to end their lifelong separation.

Although it was generally felt that *Peter Ibbetson* was a much less effective opera than its predecessor, it had many engaging moments. It was Walter Damrosch who pointed out some of these: "His remarkable knowledge of the stage, his emotional appreciation of the beautiful story of Du Maurier's," as well as his "exquisite orchestration, a flow of melody which is often of great tenderness, a delicious sense of humor, and altogether a music which envelops the drama with moments of such beauty that the effects of this combination left the . . . audience bathed in tears of sympathy and appreciation."

The Metropolitan audiences liked *Peter Ibbetson* even if many of the critics did not. It received sixteen performances during four seasons; and it had the singular honor of inaugurating the 1933-34 season of the Metropolitan.

An orchestral suite comprising several memorable pages of the opera was arranged by Mr. Taylor.

Recommended recording: Orchestral Suite, CM-X204 (CBS Symphony—Barlow).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Through the Looking-Glass*

Taylor's ingratiating and witty musical setting of Lewis Carroll's classic is one of his earliest works and the first to bring him success. He wrote it in 1917-19 as a chamber-music suite. In 1921, he revised it and adapted it for symphony orchestra, and in this form it was introduced by the New York Symphony Society under Walter Damrosch on March 10, 1923.

"The suite," wrote Taylor, "needs no extended analysis. It is based on Lewis Carroll's immortal nonsense fairy-tale, *Through the Looking-Glass*, and the five pictures it presents will, if all goes well, be readily recognizable to lovers of the book. There are four movements, the first being subdivided into two connected parts."

The first part of the first movement is entitled "Dedication" and is a setting of the poetical foreword which Carroll appended to his play; the second part describes Alice's entrance into the garden of the talking flowers. The second movement, "Jabberwocky," recreates the poem that Alice found so mystify-



ing until Humpty Dumpty explained it to her. The third movement, "Looking-Glass Insects," is a musical picture of the diptera which awed Alice—the Bee-elephant, the Gnat, the Rocking-horse-fly, the Snap-dragon-fly, and the Bread-and-butter-fly. The closing movement, "The White Knight," is a portrait of the toy Don Quixote, and his leave-taking of Alice ends the work.

Recommended recording: CM-350 (CBS Symphony—Barlow).

## TCHAIKOVSKY

PETER ILITCH TCHAIKOVSKY, b. Votkinsk, Government of Viatka, Russia, 1840. Studied law at St. Petersburg, and it was not until these studies were ended that he could devote himself to music. For three years he was a clerk in the Ministry of Justice, at the same time studying music at the St. Petersburg Conservatory with Zarembo and Anton Rubinstein. After graduating from the Conservatory, he became a professor at the newly opened Moscow Conservatory, and later a music critic. During this period he composed his first symphony, an opera, and—in 1869—the orchestral fantasy *Romeo and Juliet*, none of which were successful. An unhappy marriage in 1877 brought him to the brink of a nervous breakdown, to recover from which he was ordered to travel. He did not abandon composition, however. While in Switzerland, he learned that the influential patroness, Nadejda Filaretovna von Meck, stood ready to provide him with a handsome yearly pension which would enable him to give up teaching. This new financial freedom brought on a fresh burst of creativeness which produced such masterpieces as the Fourth Symphony, the opera *Eugen Onegin*, and the Violin Concerto. From this time on, his stature as a composer grew until there were few who did not accept him as Russia's leading composer. In 1891, he came to the United States on a concert tour and was regally welcomed. He died of cholera in St. Petersburg in 1893.

STRANGE to say, Tchaikovsky has been more fully understood and appreciated by the general masses of music lovers than by the intellectual élite. The paradox of Tchaikovsky is that he is, at one and the same time, too greatly and too little appreciated: too greatly appreciated by the musical novices who derive from him a satisfaction they do not find even in Beethoven; too little by the more schooled musicians who insist upon magnifying Tchaikovsky's faults until these succeed in obscuring his genius. But of these two opposing judgments of Tchaikovsky, it is the novice, not the trained musician, who has the more accurately evaluated the true artistic stature of the great composer; the everyday untutored music lover has understood Tchaikovsky better than have the critics, historians, or trained musicians. These latter have often—too often!—accepted Tchaikovsky's music apologetically, almost as if they were indulging in an escapade by listening to it and enjoying it. Tchaikovsky, so the musicians have often said, had little power to expand his musical ideas, which were often expressed episodically;

he had no subtlety in projecting his dramatic or emotional effects; he is, therefore—so musicians conclude—too much of the earth, too much the Russian peasant.

Yet what Francis Bacon once wrote of religion might also be said of Tchaikovsky. A little bit of learning takes one away from him—but a great deal of learning brings one back to him. It is easy to assume an air of condescension to him, to his morbid self-pity, to his hand-wringing, to his hysteria, which are the moods so often reflected in his greatest music. However, though Tchaikovsky has his faults, there are moments of enchantment in his music which it would be difficult to duplicate elsewhere; moments in which the composer expresses the elemental passions of man with a simple directness that all may understand and appreciate. Tchaikovsky's music, personal document that it is, has been an emotional experience for masses of music lovers because he knows how to speak simply and honestly. Thus, they have been touched by the deep-rooted pessimism of the last three symphonies, stirred by the passionate yearnings of Romeo for Juliet, touched by the poignant sweetness of the A minor trio, bewitched by the youthful charm of the *Nutcracker Suite*, swept by the force and strength and drama of his two concertos, one for the violin, the other for the piano.

If there are composers who are more profound than Tchaikovsky, whose works are more cerebral than his, there are also few who have equalled the poignancy of his self-expression. For Tchaikovsky is above all else a sensitive poet who unashamedly spoke his heart. His heart is in his music, and this music is for all those who approach it with their hearts rather than with their brains.

## BALLET

### *Swan Lake*

In four acts, book by Begitchev and Gelster, première at the Bolshoy Theater, Moscow, in 1877.

In 1875, the directors of the Moscow Opera commissioned Tchaikovsky to write his first ballet. Thus, the master was brought to a field of composition in which he was to prove eminently successful, was to be the forerunner of that magistral line of great Russian composers of ballet music extending through Stravinsky and Prokofiev. The *Swan Lake* (*Le Lac des Cygnes*) was presented at the Bolshoy Theater in Moscow on March 4, 1877 (choreography by Julius Reisinger). It was unsuccessful and soon withdrawn. Tchaikovsky planned to revise his score, but death intervened. As a memorial to the great composer, the second act of the ballet, revised, was performed at the St. Petersburg Maryinsky Theater—the choreography, this time, planned by Marius Petipa (in collaboration with L. I. Ivanov). One year later, the complete ballet was revised at the same theater and with the same choreographers; this time it scored a success. It has since that time remained a staple in the ballet repertory.

The action of the ballet is believed to be based on a German legend. A swan, who really is an enchanted queen, can return to human form only under the spell of moonlight. A prince arrives and delivers her from the curse which has made her a swan.

It is largely because of Tchaikovsky's suave and classic music—a score inexhaustible for its charm and freshness—that the ballet is considered one of the masterpieces of the Romantic school. The music lends itself to beautiful dancing, and Petipa exploited the score fully.

Recommended recording: VM-1028 (St. Louis Symphony—Golschmann).

## CONCERTOS

### Piano Concerto

#### *Concerto No. 1 in B-flat minor*

Tchaikovsky has himself described the curious and rather dramatic circumstances under which he introduced his great piano concerto (Op. 23) to Nicholas Rubinstein.

"On Christmas eve, 1874, we were all invited to Albrecht's and Nicholas [Rubinstein] asked me . . . to play the concerto in a classroom of the Conservatory. . . . I took my manuscript, and Nicholas and Hubert came. . . . I played through the first movement. Not a criticism, not a word. Rubinstein was silent. He was preparing his thunderstorm. . . . The silence of Rubinstein said much. It said to me at once: 'Dear friend, how can I talk about details when I dislike your composition as a whole?' But I kept my temper and played the concerto through. Again silence.

" 'Well,' I said, and stood up. Then burst forth from Rubinstein's mouth a mighty torrent of words. He spoke quietly at first; then he waxed hot, and at last he resembled Zeus hurling thunderbolts. It appeared that my concerto was utterly worthless, absolutely unplayable; passages were so commonplace and awkward that they could not be improved; the piece as a whole was bad, trivial, vulgar. I had stolen this from this one, and that from this one; so only two or three pages were good for anything, while others should be wiped out or radically rewritten. . . . I was not only astonished by this behavior, I felt myself wronged and offended. I needed friendly advice and criticism, and I shall always need them; but here was not a trace of friendliness. . . . I left the room silently and went upstairs. I was so excited and angry that I could not speak. Rubinstein soon came up, and called me into a remote room, for he noticed that I was heavily cast down. There he repeated that my concerto was impossible, pointed out many passages which needed thorough revision, and added that he would play the concerto in public if these changes were ready at a certain time. 'I shall not change a single note,' I answered, 'and I shall publish the concerto exactly as it is now.' And this, indeed, I did."

In anger, Tchaikovsky erased the name of Nicholas Rubinstein from the

dedicatory page, and substituted that of Hans von Bülow. Bülow was more appreciative of this signal honor, and more perceptive in his comprehension of the work's stature. "The ideas are so original, so noble, so powerful; the details are so interesting, and though there are many of them, they do not impair the clearness and unity of the work. The form is so mature, ripe, and distinguished for style—for intention and labor are everywhere concealed. I should weary you if I were to enumerate all the characteristics of your work, characteristics which compel me to congratulate equally the composer as well as those who shall enjoy actively or passively the work." It was Hans von Bülow who introduced the Concerto to the world on October 25, 1875, in Boston, Massachusetts.

The upshot of the Tchaikovsky-Rubinstein quarrel was that both musicians yielded a bit of ground. Tchaikovsky revised and edited the work, making some of the piano writing more agreeable to the hand. And Rubinstein confessed that he had been wrong in his original estimate. As a matter of fact, Rubinstein studied it, and performed it both in Russia and at the Paris Exhibition of 1878.

The quarrel belongs to history. The concerto remains, a landmark in music for the piano. Unquestionably it is one of the best-loved concertos of all time—and long before the majestic first theme of the first movement was exploited by popular song composers to enter the radio Hit Parade under three different titles! The first movement is music of drama and power, of sweeping strength; the second movement is tender and lyrical; the third, is brilliant virtuoso music without losing esthetic significance.

Recommended recording: VM-800 (Horowitz; NBC Symphony—Toscanini).

## Violin Concerto

### *Concerto in D major*

Like the piano concerto, the famous Violin Concerto, Op. 35, began its life against the stormy background of dissension and controversy. It was dedicated by the composer to the famous violin teacher, Leopold Auer, who—so the story goes—found it unplayable and refused to perform it. Many years later, Auer insisted that this had not been the case, the truth having been that he found some of the passages unviolinistic and suggested that they be revised. When the composer refused to do so, Auer felt that the writing was frequently too awkward, from the virtuoso's point of view, to warrant his playing it. But he never called the work "unplayable" (as Tchaikovsky said he did), and he spoke highly of its best pages.

Tchaikovsky therefore rededicated the work to Adolf Brodsky, who introduced it in Vienna on December 4, 1881. But its story was not to end there or then. It received a cold reception, and some of the critics were vitriolic. "The violin is no longer played," wrote Hanslick poisonously. "It is yanked about, it is torn asunder, it is beaten black and blue. . . . Friedrich Vischer once as-

served in reference to lascivious paintings that there are pictures which 'stink in the eye.' Tchaikovsky's violin concerto brings to us . . . the horrid idea that there may be music that stinks in the ear."

However, like the Piano Concerto, the Violin Concerto has outlived all such early misunderstandings and quarrels to become a favored work in the repertoire. "It is primarily a sensuous work," wrote Brockway and Weinstock, "to be enjoyed for the opulence of its melodies, its tireless rhythmic variety and vigor, and its bold but sensitive coloring. . . . The only disappointment the D major offers is the orchestral introduction, which is pompous but niggardly. But once the solo instrument has entered on the sweep of a broad cantilena, the unhappy first impression is permanently banished. The theme of the first movement has the character of a romantic song. . . . The brief canzonetta, a charming interlude of melancholy cast, is a needed moment of rest before the violent dynamics of the finale, as mighty in its high spirits and earthy jollity as a Beethoven kermis."

Recommended recording: VM-356 (Heifetz; London Philharmonic—Barbirolli).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Capriccio Italien*

Tchaikovsky was inspired by a visit to Italy (1880) to compose an orchestral capriccio incorporating Italian folk melodies, some of which he found in published collections, others of which he heard in the street. The opening fanfare, for example, he derived from the bugle calls at the barracks of the Royal Cuirassiers, which he heard each morning. *Capriccio Italien*, Op. 45, is built from two popular Italian subjects which are heard in succession after the fanfare that opens the work. A dynamic Tarantella (interrupted briefly by a tender melody for the oboes) brings the composition to a dramatic close.

Recommended recording: VM-632 (Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler).

### *Francesca da Rimini*

Tchaikovsky originally intended to write an opera about the tragic love of Francesca for Paolo as told in the fifth canto of Dante's *Inferno*. He soon abandoned this idea, and, in its place, wrote a symphonic fantasia (Op. 32) which describes that part of the medieval Hell in which the condemned are tortured. Here, Dante comes upon Francesca da Rimini, and a beautiful clarinet solo describes her love for Paolo. The work ends, as it began, with a turbulent picture of the underworld.

"Piquant charms and dazzling fireworks abound in Tchaikovsky's *Francesca da Rimini*," wrote Saint-Saëns, "which bristles with difficulties and shrinks from no violence of effect. The gentlest and kindest of men has let loose a whirlwind in this work. . . . But the composer's talent and astounding technique are so great that the critic can feel only pleasure in the work."

Recommended recording: VM-598 (New York Philharmonic—Barbirolli).

### *Marche Slave*

In 1876, a benefit concert was to be held for the soldiers wounded in the Turko-Serbian War. The Russians, of course, were in sympathy with their fellow-Slavs, and, in composing a work expressly for this concert, Tchaikovsky was determined to forecast a Slavic victory. The *Marche Slave*, Op. 31, opens with a Slavic funeral march. A contrast comes in the Trio which is compounded of two folk melodies and the Russian national hymn. The closing of the work converts the opening funeral march into a hymn of triumph.

Recommended recording: C-11567D (Cleveland Orchestra—Rodzinski).

### *Nutcracker Suite*

That the often lugubrious Tchaikovsky could write music in the graceful and enchanting vein of the composer he admired most profoundly—Mozart—is proved by this famous suite, Op. 71a.

The *Nutcracker Suite* was inspired by Dumas' adaptation of E. T. A. Hoffmann's story, *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*.

Receiving a Nutcracker for Christmas, a little girl dreams that the Nutcracker becomes a handsome prince who leads the toys in a battle against the mice. The Nutcracker takes the girl to Jam Mountain, where they are welcomed by the Sugarplum Fairy, and are entertained with toys, dances, and festivities.

The Suite was the fruit of a commission that Tchaikovsky received in 1890 for an opera or a ballet. He composed it in 1892, and a few months later he himself conducted its successful première in St. Petersburg.

The suite is in eight parts: I. Miniature Overture; II. Russian Dance; III. March; IV. Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy (in this movement Tchaikovsky introduces the celesta into the orchestra for the first time); V. Arabian Dance; VI. Chinese Dance; VII. Reed-Pipe Dance; VIII. Waltz of the Flowers.

Any explanatory comment is superfluous for music as appealing and as easy to comprehend as this.

Recommended recording: VM-1020 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy).

### *Overture Solennelle "1812"*

In the spring of 1880, Tchaikovsky was asked to write a musical composition to be used in the consecration of the Temple of Christ in Moscow. He planned a fantasia which could be played in the public square—a large, ostentatious work for orchestra, drums, and even cannon. He decided to glorify the year of 1812 in his overture, the year of Napoleon's defeat in Russia, because this was also the year in which the Temple of Christ had been built. After the introductory section, in which he utilizes the Russian hymn, *God, Preserve Thy People*, is brought to a climax, the main body of the overture describes the Battle of Borodino. Tchaikovsky here uses both the

Russian national anthem and the *Marseillaise* within the texture of his music. The overture develops into a breath-taking climax in which the Russian anthem emerges sonorously and brilliantly.

Recommended recording: CM-X205 (Cleveland Orchestra—Rodzinski).

### *Romeo and Juliet*

*Romeo and Juliet* was Tchaikovsky's first important work. It was composed in 1870 on the advice of Balakirev, who provided Tchaikovsky not only with the idea for this overture-fantasy but even with a musical outline. It was Balakirev who suggested that the work begin with a theme of religious character (in the nature of a chorale) descriptive of Friar Laurence; that the work then progress into a fiery Allegro suggestive of the feud between the Montague and the Capulet houses; that this, in turn, should be succeeded by the love music. Tchaikovsky followed Balakirev's suggestions closely.

Certainly the most distinguished part of the overture-fantasy is the wonderful love music which first unfolds lusciously in the strings. It is interesting to point out that at the time Tchaikovsky wrote this music he was under the spell of the greatest romance of his life—his love for the actress Désirée Artôt. "I love her with all my heart and soul," he wrote in one of his letters, "and I feel I can't live without her." Ultimately, Désirée married a Spaniard, but Tchaikovsky carried the memory of his love long after this took place. Undoubtedly, in writing of the love of Romeo and Juliet, he was expressing his own ardor as well; and it is probably for this reason that the music was written with conviction and moving intensity.

Recommended recording: CM-478 (Cleveland Orchestra—Rodzinski).

## QUARTET

### *Quartet in D major*

It is doubtful if this early quartet of Tchaikovsky (Op. 11) would have survived if it were not for the second movement, the famous Andante Cantabile. It is derivative music, for the most part, without any of the identifying traits of Tchaikovsky's maturity. But the second movement, Andante Cantabile, is a melody of poignancy and unforgettable beauty, and for this movement alone the quartet deserves performance. It is well known that the theme of this movement is not original with Tchaikovsky. The story goes that Tchaikovsky heard an artisan whistle the melody while at work, and was so taken with it that he immediately put it down on paper. In writing his Quartet, he decided to make it the basis of his slow movement.

The other movements of the quartet include: Moderato e semplice, which combines momentary gaiety with typical Tchaikovsky self-pity; a strongly syncopated Scherzo; and a Finale, intensely Russian in its mood and atmosphere.

Recommended recording: CM-407 (Roth Quartet).

## SONGS

The fame of Tchaikovsky's orchestral music has somewhat obscured his gift in writing tender songs. His songs are for the most part sad and funereal. "To play through twenty or thirty of them at a time," wrote Ernest Newman, "is sufficient to make the whole world look gray or black for a long time after. Yet in pointing out melancholy and despair as the dominant note of his songs I would not be understood to imply that each is a mere repetition, in other phrases and to other words, of one unvarying message. There are more shades than one of melancholy, more paths than one to despair; and for each of these Tchaikovsky finds a new scheme of expression. . . . Though a long and continuous course of the songs leaves us somewhat debilitated, the artistic interest is always kept alive by the fine workmanship and the discriminating psychology. I would specify as examples of this delicate barometric variation of the music with the atmosphere of the poem *None but the Lonely Heart*; *A Heavy Tear*, and *Invocation to Sleep*; *He Loves Me So Dearly*; *One Small World*; *Speak Not, O Beloved*; and *Sleepless Nights*."

Recommended recordings: *At the Ball*, V-16418 (Kurenko); *None but the Lonely Heart*, V-1706 (Tibbett); *One Small World*, V-16418 (Kurenko); *Pilgrim's Song*, V-7779 (Tibbett); *So Soon Forgotten*, V-2094 (Kurenko); *Speak Not, O Beloved*, V-2093 (Kurenko).

## SYMPHONY

Tchaikovsky composed three symphonies before he arrived at his full powers in this form. These three symphonies are interesting primarily as museum pieces. Insignificant in their own right because of a frequent lack of organization, immaturity of conception, and diffuseness, they are important chiefly in revealing the formative stage of a great symphonist.

In 1866, when he was twenty-six years old, Tchaikovsky composed his first symphony, Op. 13, subtitled *Winter Daydreams*. His Second Symphony, Op. 17, known as the *Little Russian* Symphony, came five years later, in 1872. The Third Symphony, Op. 29—called the *Polish* Symphony because the fifth movement is marked *Tempo di Polacca*—was composed in 1875. The three symphonies are characterized, first of all, by their allegiance to Russian folk music, Russian and Ukrainian folk songs forming the backbone of these works. They are melodic, sentimental, occasionally charming, sometimes naïve. Pleasing on occasional hearing, they do not profit by intimacy.

Then came the Fourth Symphony, and with it Russia's greatest symphonist—and one of the foremost symphonic composers after Beethoven—emerged out of his shell of immaturity. After the Fourth, came the Fifth and the *Pathétique*, symphonies whose appeal to audiences everywhere never seems to lessen.

James Gibbons Huneker discussed Tchaikovsky the symphonist in the following terms: "He was not a great symphonist like Brahms; he had not the sense of formal beauty, preferring instead to work in free fashion within the



easy and loosely flowing lines of the overture-fantasia. . . . He takes small, compact themes, nugget-like motives, which he subjects to the most daring and scrutinizing treatment. He polishes, expands, varies, and develops his ideas in a marvelous manner, and if the form is often wavering the decoration is always gorgeous. . . . He is first and last a dramatic poet. He delineates the human soul in convulsions of love, hate, joy, and fear; he is an unique master of rhythms and of the torrential dynamics that express primal emotions in the full flood."

Recommended recordings: Symphony No. 2, VM-790 (Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra—Goossens); Symphony No. 3, VM-747 (National Symphony—Kindler).

### *Symphony No. 4 in F minor*

Tchaikovsky always had a weakness for his Fourth Symphony, Op. 36. Its birth cost him great pain, but, once born, it appeared to him a child worthy of admiration. "No one of my orchestral pieces was the result of such labor, but on no one have I worked with so much love and with such devotion."

The symphony was composed during 1877 and completed in January of the following year. It was written for Tchaikovsky's beloved patroness, Nadejda Filaretovna von Meck. "How glad I am," wrote the composer to her, "that it is *our* work, and you will know when you hear it how much I thought about you in every measure."

Mme. von Meck plays so dominant a role not only in the creation of this symphony, but in the creative life of Tchaikovsky, that it is essential to review the strange relationship between composer and patroness. It was a thirteen-year relationship in which Mme. von Meck provided Tchaikovsky with an annual income, a relationship marked by excessive tenderness on the part of both, but cemented exclusively through an exchange of often passionate letters. For, by a mutual agreement, Mme. von Meck and Tchaikovsky never met face to face. This has been explained in a variety of ways, but never definitively, and the problem is still enshrouded in mystery.

Then the relationship was dissipated—as mysteriously as it had begun. While on a trip to the Russian Caucasus, Tchaikovsky received word from Mme. von Meck that, because of financial reverses, she could no longer continue his pension. Tchaikovsky wrote immediately, expressing his grief at the financial plight of his "beloved friend," and assuring her emphatically that their friendship could continue uninterrupted without the benefit of an annual stipend. Both this letter and others, Mme. von Meck never answered. When Tchaikovsky returned to Moscow he learned that his friend had had no financial difficulties, but had invented them in order to sever a relationship that had begun to bore her.

Tchaikovsky himself has left a detailed analysis of the Fourth Symphony which is perhaps the most suitable guide to it. "The Introduction is the kernel, the quintessence, the chief thought of the whole symphony. This is Fate, the fatal power which hinders one in the pursuit of happiness from

gaining the goal, which jealously provides that peace and comfort do not prevail, that the sky is not free from clouds. . . . This might is overpowering and invincible. There is nothing to do but to submit and vainly complain. . . . The feeling of despondency and despair grow ever stronger and more passionate. It is better to turn from the realities and to lull one's-self in dreams." The principal subject of the movement is a light-hearted solo for clarinet, which Tchaikovsky interpreted as follows: "Oh joy! What a fine and sweet dream! A radiant being, promising happiness, floats before me and beckons me. The importunate first theme of the Allegro is now heard far off, and now the soul is wholly enwrapped with dreams. There is no thought of gloom and cheerlessness. Happiness! Happiness! Happiness! No, they are only dreams, and Fate dispels them. . . . There is no port: you will be tossed hither and thither by the waves, until the sea swallows you. Such is the program, in substance, of the first movement.

"The second movement shows another phase of sadness. Here is that melancholy feeling which enwraps one when he sits at night alone in the house, exhausted by work. . . . One mourns the past and has neither the courage nor the will to begin a new life. . . . One thinks on the glad hours. . . . One thinks also on the sad moments, the irrevocable losses. And all this is now so far away. And it is all so sad and yet so sweet to muse over the past.

"There is no determined feeling, no exact impressions in the third movement. Here are capricious arabesques, vague figures which slip into the imagination when one has taken wine and is slightly intoxicated. The mood is now gay, now mournful."

Elsewhere, in a letter to his patroness, Tchaikovsky described the novel writing found in this movement: "There is a new effect in the Scherzo. . . . At first the strings play alone and pizzicato throughout. In the Trio the woodwind instruments enter and play alone. At the end all three choirs toss short phrases to each other. I believe that the effect of sounds and colors will be most interesting."

Tchaikovsky's description of the last movement is as follows: "If you find no pleasure in yourself, look about you. Go to the people. See how it understands being jolly, how it surrenders itself to gaiety. The picture of a folk holiday. . . . How they enjoy themselves, how happy they are. And will you maintain that everything in the world is sad and gloomy? There is still happiness, simple, native happiness. Rejoice in the happiness of others—and you can still live."

In the last movement is incorporated a Russian folk melody, *In the fields there stands a birch tree*.

Recommended recording: VM-88o (NBC Symphony—Stokowski).

### *Symphony No. 5 in E minor*

It is particularly interesting to learn that Tchaikovsky looked upon this symphony—which the world now acknowledges as one of his greatest—as

proof that he was through as a composer. Before beginning work on it he lamented to his brother that his old creative urge had grown feeble. And when the symphony was introduced—in St. Petersburg on November 17, 1888 under the baton of the composer—he wrote to Mme. von Meck: "There is something repellent about it, a patchiness and insincerity and 'manufacturedness' which the public instinctively recognizes. It was obvious to me that the ovations I received were prompted more by my earlier work, and that the symphony itself did not really please the audience. The consciousness of this brings me a sharp twinge of self-dissatisfaction. Am I really played out, as they say? Can I merely repeat and ring the changes on my earlier idiom? Last night, I looked through *our* symphony [the Fourth]. What a difference! How immeasurably superior it is! It is very, very sad!"

Such self-depreciation sounds strange to present-day concert-goers, to whom the Fifth is a favorite symphony, of moving grandeur and majesty. Tchaikovsky himself soon realized that he had been too harsh. After a subsequent performance of the symphony, he wrote, "I like it far better now."

"The gloomy, mysterious opening theme"—according to Ernest Newman—"suggests the leaden, deliberate tread of life. The opening Allegro, after experimenting in many moods, ends mournfully and wearily. The beauty of the Andante is twice broken in upon by the first sombre theme. The third movement—the waltz—is never really gay; there is always the suggestion of impending fate in it; while at times the scale passages for the strings give it an eerie, ghostly character. At the end of this also there comes the heavy, muffled tread of the veiled figure that is suggested by the opening theme. Finally the last movement shows us, as it were, the emotional transformation of this theme, evidently in harmony with a change in the part it now plays in the curious drama. It is in the major instead of in the minor; it is no longer a symbol of weariness and foreboding, but bold, vigorous, emphatic, self-confident. What may be the precise significance of the beautiful theme of the second movement that reappears in the finale it is impossible to say; but it is quite clear that the transmutation which the first subject of the allegro undergoes, just before the close of the symphony, is of the same psychological order as that of the 'fate' motive—a change from clouds to sunshine, from defeat to triumph."

Recommended recording: CM-406 (Cleveland Orchestra—Rodzinski).

### *Symphony No. 6 in B minor ("Pathétique")*

In no other work did Tchaikovsky express the suffering and mental pain of his life more poignantly than in the first and fourth movements of this symphony. It is almost as if, in the closing months of his life, he were reviewing his lifelong sufferings, and as if, in writing into the last movement as heart-rending an expression of grief as is to be found anywhere in his music, he were writing his own threnody. Tchaikovsky himself conducted the première of the Symphony on October 28, 1893, to a rather apathetic audience

—although his faith in the work remained unshaken by this cool reception. Nine days later he died of cholera.

There are many unusual features in this symphony. There is the strange tonality of the opening: not in the key of B minor but in the subdominant. There is, furthermore, the placement of the slow movement at the end of the work. Finally, there is the unusual juxtaposition of a light and graceful movement, and a movement built out of a stirring march-like subject, as second and third sections of the symphony.

Streatfeild calls the *Pathétique* Tchaikovsky's most characteristic work, "into which he put most of himself. The fourth symphony may excel it in point of sheer picturesqueness, the fifth in poetic feeling, but in the sixth we feel that strongly personal note which rarely fails to appeal to sympathetic souls. Tchaikovsky affixed no program to it, but the story of a tortured soul, seeking an anodyne for its misery in the rapture of pleasure and in the ecstasy of battle, and finally sinking to hopeless pessimism and suicide, is scarcely to be misread. . . . When Tchaikovsky wrote the *Symphonie pathétique* he had attained such mastery of his material as gives him right to rank among great musicians. Whatever he chose to say he could express with absolute certainty of touch. In the *Symphonie pathétique* there are no effects that miss fire, no details that do not 'come off'. . . . It must stand as a very interesting and complete picture of a certain frame of mind, probably the completest expression in music of the *fin de siècle* that has ever been written."

Recommended recording: VM-337 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy).

## TRIO

### *Trio in A minor*

Tchaikovsky composed his celebrated A minor Trio, Op. 50, "to the memory of a great artist"—the artist being none other than his friend, Nicholas Rubinstein, who died in 1881. The elegiac nature of this work is emphasized in the first movement (*Pezzo elegiaco*) in sonata form, the principal subject of which is a melancholy threnody. This movement, wrote Edwin Evans, happily combines "symmetry of form with rhapsody of utterance." In the second movement (*Tema con Variazioni*) the composer recalls a happy day spent with Rubinstein by using a gay melodic subject which the peasants near Moscow had sung at Rubinstein's request. A series of eleven variations follow which Tchaikovsky intended to portray different facets of the musician's personality, though what specific trait each variation is supposed to describe is left to the imagination of the listener. The trio concludes with a skilfully contrived contrapuntal Finale presented with great energy and robustness.

Recommended recording: VM-388 (Yehudi and Hephzibah Menuhin; Eisenberg).

# THOMAS

CHARLES LOUIS AMBROISE THOMAS, b. Metz, 1811. Entered the Paris Conservatory in 1828, and after a few years won the Prix de Rome. Back in Paris, in 1836, he began to compose operas, the first of which, *La double échelle*, was presented by the Paris Opéra-Comique in 1837. He composed several other operas before he achieved success. After this, he wrote both grand operas and operettas with a fertile pen. In 1856, he was appointed professor at the Conservatory in Paris, and a decade later his masterpiece, *Mignon*, was introduced at the Opéra-Comique. *Mignon*, and its successor *Hamlet*, made Thomas an idol of Parisian music lovers. He was a favorite at the court of Napoleon III, and he was appointed director of the Conservatory. He died in Paris in 1896.

THOUGH *Hamlet* is a good opera, and the overture to *Raymond* is a staple in light-music repertory, actually Ambroise Thomas is exclusively a one-opera composer—that opera being, of course, *Mignon*. His gifts were many—sentiment and tenderness, a talent for pleasing his audiences with his lovable melodies and enchanting moods, dramatic taste, and skill in instrumentation. And nowhere did he reveal these gifts more conspicuously than in *Mignon*. If in *Mignon*, as in all his other works, we are disconcerted by his indefatigable desire to charm his public, and by his lack of self-criticism, we are, at other moments, delighted by his appealing writing and his power of holding our interest and admiration.

## OPERA

### *Mignon*

In three acts, book by Michel Carré and Jules Barbier, first performed at the Opéra-Comique in Paris on November 17, 1866.

In 1860, Thomas decided to take a long rest from his labors as a composer of light and serious operas. That rest seems to have refreshed and revitalized him, for when he eventually returned to composing he produced his masterpiece—*Mignon*. It was sensationally successful when introduced by the Opéra-Comique; nor was its success temporary. Within twenty-eight years, Paris witnessed about one thousand performances of the opera. On the night that the Opéra-Comique theater was razed to the ground by fire (1887), the opera that was being performed was *Mignon*.

"If this opera is successful and popular," wrote Henri de Curzon, "it is because it offers many things to many people: laughter and tears, sincere emotion and frivolity, character and facility. . . . Its banal pages are relieved by an inspiration of exquisite grace. Conventional effects are balanced by the poignant truth of still another effect."

What Eduard Hanslick wrote of *Mignon*, when that opera was first introduced to Germany, is still valid criticism: "This opera is in no place powerfully striking, and it is not the work of a richly organized, original genius. Rather does it appear to us as a work of a sensitive and refined artist, showing

the practical ability of a master hand. Occasionally somewhat meager and tawdry . . . the music to *Mignon* is nevertheless mostly dramatic, spirited and graceful, not of deep, but of true, and, in many instances, warm feeling."

The libretto was based on Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. Wilhelm Meister buys the gypsy-girl Mignon when she is beaten by the chief of the band, and takes her to his castle. When Mignon, who falls in love with Wilhelm, realizes that he is in love with someone else she decides to commit suicide. But she meets Lothario, a singer who has lost his memory, and to him she expresses the wish that Meister's castle be burned to the ground. Lothario disappears, and before long flames leap up from the castle towards the sky. Eventually, Wilhelm Meister and Mignon are united, and Lothario, regaining his memory, realizes that the castle he has burnt is his own, and that Mignon is his daughter.

The overture to *Mignon* is popular, built out of two of the principal arias of the opera: "*Connais-tu le pays?*" (Act I) and the polonaise "*Je suis Titania*" (Act II), both for soprano. The soprano aria known as the "*Styrienne*," the tenor aria, "*Adieu, Mignon, courage*," and the Rondo-Gavotte, "*Me voici dans son boudoir*," for alto (all from Act I) are also celebrated.

Recommended recording: abridged, CM-Opera Set 19 (Soloists, Chorus, Orchestra of the Théâtre de la Monnaie, Brussels—Bastin); Overture, V-118545 (NBC Symphony—Toscanini).

## TOCH

ERNST TOCH, b. Vienna, 1887. In music he was virtually self-taught. He began composing early, and a series of prizes—the Mozart Prize in 1909, the Mendelssohn Award in 1910, and the Austrian State Award four years consecutively—persuaded him to devote himself to music. In 1913, he went to Mannheim, where he taught and composed. Within ten years his works were performed at leading German festivals, placing him in the vanguard of younger German composers. The rise of Nazi power sent him out of Germany in 1933, first to London, then to America. He is now a resident of Los Angeles, where he has written some music for the films and has served as professor at the University of Southern California.

AN extraordinary feeling for musical form is combined in Toch's music with a pleasing wit and thorough articulateness. He has written many works, of which only a few are familiar; but in all of them he is the master of style and a craftsman to command admiration. There is consummate ease in his expression, a fluidity of writing which proves that the man knows what to say and how to say it. Everything is clear, to-the-point, precise; everything is well-ordered; everything is integrated and coherent. His works are easy to assimilate, lyrical, attractive to the ear, and sometimes touched with an engaging humor.

## CONCERTO

*Second Piano Concerto*

Toch's Second Piano Concerto, Op. 61, sometimes called "Symphony for Piano and Orchestra," was composed in 1933, and was introduced in London under the baton of Sir Henry J. Wood with the composer playing the piano part. Paul A. Pisk has written the following analysis of this work: "The opening Allegro is in sonata form but without any long development section; both main themes are elaborated immediately after they have made their appearance, the first in fugal fashion divided between piano and orchestra; the second, more harmonically, by means of transposition and tonal remoulding. The Scherzo is dominated by a motive in a peculiar tarantella rhythm, and by a second slow, singing Viennese waltz. The short Adagio contrasts a purely orchestral section with a long piano section, unaccompanied. The composer gives the title 'Zyklus Variabilis' (Changeable Cycle) to the last movement. Of course the name itself indicates a very free variation form. The plainly differentiated parts are all separate. The last one, in its development, harks back to the first and second movements; but even the middle sections, in spite of their diversifications in structure and character, are still clearly derived from the main theme."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

*Pinocchio*

In 1935, when Toch was a guest at the home of Alvin Johnson, director of the New School for Social Research, he saw an illustrated copy of Collodi's *Pinocchio*. Then and there the idea came to him to write an overture interpreting the childhood classic. As he explains in a prefatory note in the score: "Pinocchio is a legendary figure in Italian folk lore created by Carlo Collodi. According to the story, he was fashioned by old Gepetto, a woodcarver, from a curiously animated piece of wood. His rascally demeanor and mischievous escapades gave his creator many an anxious moment. His particular failure was fibbing, each lie prompting his already long nose to grow longer. He is a sort of brother-in-mischief to the German Till Eulenspiegel. To this day, Italian children are warned by their elders that their noses will grow as long as Pinocchio's if they do not tell the truth."

Toch subtitled his work a "merry overture," and it is indeed a gay piece of orchestral writing, a piquant and saucy portrait of the mischievous Pinocchio as well as a vivid and ironic description of his escapades. The work was introduced on December 10, 1936 by the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Otto Klemperer, and is dedicated to Alvin Johnson.

Recommended recording: C-11665 (Chicago Symphony Orchestra—Stock).

*Variation-Phantasy on the Westminster Chimes ("Big Ben")*

The idea for his set of orchestral variations on *Big Ben* (Op. 62) occurred to Toch in London, but the final writing did not take place until he reached New York. "The suggestion for *Big Ben*," wrote Toch, "came to me during my stay in London in 1933-4. Once on a foggy night, while I was crossing Westminster Bridge, the familiar chimes struck the full hour. The theme lingered in my imagination for a long while and evolved into other forms, somehow still connected with the original one, until, finally, like the chimes themselves, it seemed to disappear into the fog from which it had emerged."

The work, which has been extensively performed throughout the United States, was introduced by the Boston Symphony Orchestra in the fall of 1934. The score is dedicated to Koussevitzky.

Pisk analyzed the work as follows: "The melody of the clock . . . is only the frame of the piece. From it there arises right at the start a strongly rhythmical, melodic main theme, which is quickly stripped of its age-old association and is invested with a new meaning by the aid of free polyphony, the addition of chromatic counterpoint, and that personal touch which makes it genuine 'Toch.' The variations that follow partake of both: the original chimes, and the 'changes' rung by Toch. Their modifications abound in differing mood forms, all the way from the heavy, peasant-like, almost Russian dance, to the pastel colorings of a London fog. A massive, ingenious fugue crowns the work but does not bring it to a close. After a rhapsodical transitional appearance of the main theme, overlaid at times with harp passages and then once again emerging, the clock tones of the beginning quietly fade away."

## TURINA

JOAQUIN TURINA, b. Seville, 1882. Studied the piano with Trago in Madrid, then went to Paris to enter the Schola Cantorum where his teachers included Vincent d'Indy. He stayed in Paris for ten years, during which period he composed some chamber-music works of considerable promise. In 1914, Turina returned to Spain, settling in Madrid, and it was not long thereafter that he became famous as a composer of orchestral music. He also became well known as a teacher (at the Madrid Conservatory) and a critic.

**T**URINA stands with Manuel de Falla as a leading interpreter of Spain in music. He combines a sound technique, acquired during his long stay in Paris, with a sensitive feeling for Spanish musical idioms. Analyzing Turina's style, Leigh Henry wrote that he is a "musical Impressionist of fine



sensibility, both spiritually and musically. His music, however, differs in constructive methods from that of those generally termed Impressionists. He tends toward the rather literary type of poetic expression exemplified in Albéniz's *Iberia* or in *Images* of Debussy, but his treatment of sound and rhythm is more objective in the strictly aural sense, and more full of feeling for pure musical design than that of the elder Spaniard. Viewed as a whole, the general character of his work is subjective and Impressionistic, and has a certain flavor of romanticism."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Danzas Fantásticas*

This is a set of three dances, richly flavored with Spanish ingredients. The first dance, entitled "Exaltation," was inspired by a quotation from José Mas: "It was like the features of some incomparable picture, moving within the calyx of a blossom." It opens placidly; then, after a chromatic passage for the strings, a demoniac dance bursts forth. The section ends as it began—on a serene note.

The second dance, called "Musing," is sensual and languorous, filled with thematic material suggestive of Andalusian folk music. "The strings of a guitar," runs the appended quotation, "sounding laments, of a nature that remind one of nothing so much as the weight of sorrow." In the third dance, "Orgy," we once again have savage passion and vertiginous movement: "The perfume of flowers is intermingled with the odor of the camomile and the bouquet of tall chalices filled with incomparable wine. From this, like an incense, the dance rises." The work ends in corybantic abandon.

### *La Procesión del Rocio*

This work is generally accepted as Turina's masterpiece. It was composed during his stay in Paris, in 1912, and was introduced by the Madrid Symphony Orchestra one year later. Its success went a long way in establishing Turina's reputation. Particularly did it impress the leading musicians of France; Debussy likened it to a luminous fresco.

Each year at Triana near Seville, there took place a religious pageant called the *Procesión del Rocio*, a colorful procession at whose head was borne an image of the Virgin carried in a silver cart drawn by oxen. All Seville was festive on this holiday, and everyone—from the great to the humble—participated. It is this procession which Turina depicts in his orchestral poem. In the first part, the town is painted in gala mood: there is excitement in the air, and dance music is heard. Then the procession comes on the scene, and a religious theme is sounded. When the march is over, the joyous merry-making and dancing are resumed.

# VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, b. Down Ampney, Gloucestershire, 1872. Studied at the Royal College of Music under Parry and Stanford, and subsequently in Germany with Max Bruch. He early interested himself in old English music, became a member of the English Folksong Society, and was instrumental in recovering from obscurity many examples of early English folk music. In his own writing, he was given direction and purpose by folk-music examples. Dissatisfied with his technique, he went to Paris in 1909 to study with Ravel (he was Ravel's only pupil), and it was after this that he composed his first important works. During the First World War, he served in France and Macedonia. Following the war, he became a conductor of the Bach Choir and a member of the faculty of the Royal College of Music. His stature as a composer developed until he was generally accepted as one of the major musical voices of England. In 1935 he received the Order of Merit.

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS's music is firmly rooted in English tradition, and is an expression of English temperament and character. It is Anglo-Saxon in its expression of serene beauty and in its tight-lipped restraint. Profoundly influenced by English folk music, it incorporated within itself the structure and spirit of the English folk song. His melodic construction has folk-song physiognomy, and even his most original work has an unmistakable folk-lore flavor. His is an authentic English musical art.

"All of Vaughan Williams's works," wrote Philip Heseltine, "are characterized by strong melodic invention and a most original fund of contrapuntal resource, in which there is nothing even faintly reminiscent of scholasticism. With the purely harmonic developments of the twentieth century, Vaughan Williams shows but little sympathy in his work. We certainly find extremely novel combinations of sounds in some of his later compositions, but they are almost invariably conditioned by the movement of the individual parts, of which the line is often seen in a higher dimensional aspect, so to speak, through the addition to each note of the two other notes necessary to complete the common chord."

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Fantasia on a Theme by Tallis*

Vaughan Williams's intensive researches into England's musical past brought him into contact with composers, neglected for the most part, whose work he found to be full-blooded and original. Thus he came upon the sixteenth-century Thomas Tallis.

His *Fantasia* was composed in 1910. Some time before this, Vaughan Williams had spent eight months of study with Ravel. This period brought him greater mastery of form and a surer compositorial technique, without affecting basically the nature of his style. In the works that followed his Paris visit, of which the *Fantasia* was the most significant, there is greater compactness of material, and an increased astuteness in thematic development; but

Vaughan Williams remained the English composer, nurtured by England's past.

A vital element distinguishes the *Fantasia*, written after the period of study with Ravel, from the three *Norfolk Rhapsodies* written before that time. Vaughan Williams had now liberated himself from a slavish use of folk music. Instead, his material—though deriving its character of tranquillity and refinement from old English music—was for the most part of original stamp. It is true that for his *Fantasia* he borrowed his opening subject: the third of eight tunes by Tallis which the master had composed in 1567 for the Archbishop's Metrical Psalter. But once this subject is permitted enrichment and expansion under the composer's fertile imagination, what we hear in the music is unmistakably Vaughan Williams's voice, not that of Thomas Tallis. The sobriety of style, the extraordinary facility in evolving a theme from embryo to full growth, the quiet introspection of mood—all belong to Vaughan Williams, and are qualities by which many of his later works are identified.

There is no mistaking the English dignity, simplicity, and restraint of the *Fantasia*. The English folk-song differs from the folk music of other European countries in its reticence, its jewel-like perfection of idiom, its exquisite refinement and sensitivity, its calmness and sobriety. Such qualities likewise set apart Vaughan Williams's style from that of a Germanic Richard Strauss and a French Ravel. And if the *Fantasia* achieves an ecclesiastical flavor, it is the English Church of the Reformation which finds expression in this music; certainly not the Italian Church, with its ornateness and display.

Recommended recording: VM-769 (B.B.C. Symphony—Boult).

### *Norfolk Rhapsody No. 1 in E minor*

It was as an immediate result of his profound study of English folk music that Vaughan Williams composed three *Norfolk Rhapsodies* in 1905 and 1906, incorporating authentic folk songs. It was his original intention to have these three Rhapsodies serve as a Norfolk Folk Symphony. In such a scheme, the first Rhapsody would have been the introduction and first movement; the second Rhapsody (D minor) would have been the slow movement; while the third Rhapsody (Alla Marcia, G minor and G major) would be the finale. The composer, however, soon discarded this plan, largely because the second and third rhapsodies did not appeal to him too strongly; and only the *First Norfolk Rhapsody* has maintained a permanent place in the orchestral repertory. In it, by borrowing largely from folk material native to King's Lynn, Norfolk (including such well-known airs as *The Captain's Apprentice*, *A Bold Young Sailor*, *The Basket of Eggs*, *Ward the Pirate*, etc.) Vaughan Williams has dressed folk tunes in an elaborate and effective orchestral garb.

## SYMPHONIES

*A London Symphony*

*A London Symphony* was the second of Vaughan Williams's symphonies, his first—*Sea Symphony*, for solo, chorus, and orchestra on a text by Walt Whitman—having been composed in 1903–09. *A London Symphony* came in 1914, and was not only the greatest of Vaughan Williams's works up to that time, but also one of the greatest symphonies by a modern English composer.

"The title," he explained, "may suggest to some hearers a descriptive piece, but this is not the intention of the composer. A better title would be *Symphony by a Londoner*. That is to say, the life of London (including possibly its sights and sounds) has suggested to the composer an attempt at musical expression; but it would be no help to the hearer to describe these in words. The music is intended to be self-impressive, but must stand or fall as 'absolute music.' Therefore, if listeners recognize suggestions of such things as the *Westminster Chimes* or the *Lavender's Cry* they are asked to consider these as accidents, not essentials of the music."

The symphony is in four movements. One English critic provided the following illuminating program. First Movement: Lento; Allegro risoluto. London sleeps; the Thames flows serenely through the city; the city awakens; we get glimpses of different parts of the city, its varied character, its humor, its activity. Second Movement: Lento. A portrait of the region known as Bloomsbury; a damp and foggy twilight; poverty and tragedy; an old musician outside a "pub" plays *Sweet Lavender*. Third Movement: Scherzo (Nocturne); Allegro Vivace. Sitting late one Saturday evening at the Temple Embankment; the Thames flows by serenely. Fourth Movement: Andante con moto; Maestoso alla marcia; Epilogue—Andante sostenuto. A picture of the more cruel aspects of the city; the unemployed and the unfortunate; the music ends with chimes of Big Ben on Westminster Tower. The Epilogue presents a picture of London as a whole. The symphony ends as it began: the Thames flows silently, serenely. . . .

What is perhaps most notable in this symphony is its apt re-creation of the subtlest atmospheres and backgrounds of London: the Thames at dawn as it passes by a city touched by the peace and mystery of sleep, or (in the second movement) a district of London saturated with fog at dusk. Also, this work is remarkable for its deft use of popular music. Used with economy and discretion, it brings authentic flavors and colors to the work. Thus we find in the symphony a music-hall ditty *We'll All Go Down to the Strand* which, far from vulgarizing the symphony as a whole, gives it its brilliant atmospheric color.

*A London Symphony* was introduced in London in 1914 under the baton of Geoffrey Toye. Six years later it was revised by the composer, and at that time the British Music Society selected it as the most important native musical work produced by an Englishman.

*Pastoral Symphony*

*The Pastoral Symphony* followed *A London Symphony* by seven years. It is deeply personal music which proved the composer's capacity to depict the most elusive and haunting moods. As its composer has insisted, it is not a programmatic symphony; the listener will be at a loss to find in it any reproduction of singing of birds or the flowing of brooks. The composer preferred to have us find in the music whatever images come into our minds. "The mood of the symphony," is his only explanation, "is almost entirely quiet and contemplative."

"You think you have had 'contemplation' in the first movement," wrote Herbert Howells, "and, judged by the commoner standards, you have. But what Vaughan Williams means by 'contemplative mood' you will only know when the second is reached." This second movement (*Lento moderato*) is a poetic page of rare calm and serene beauty. The third movement (*Moderato pesante*) was described by the composer as a "slow dance." And in the Finale the atmosphere of revery and peace returns in music of a tranquil and enchanting beauty rare in the work of a twentieth-century composer.

In this symphony we discover not only the influence of English folk music but also that of modal music. Much of the remoteness of the music arises from modal scales and harmonies and from the persistent use of parallel fourths and fifths.

*Symphony in F minor*

Vaughan Williams's Fourth Symphony, composed in 1935, is so unlike the symphonies that preceded it that it might have come from another pen. Utilizing polytonality, he has here written astringent music with hard surfaces. It is modern in its spirit. Of his four symphonies, this is the best integrated: two important themes heard in the first movement form the germ for the entire symphony and are heard in different guises throughout the entire work. This does not, however, preclude the introduction of new material. The second movement has an effective flute solo; the Scherzo movement and the Finale contain fugal writing of great dexterity. But reminiscences of previous movements knit the third and fourth movements to the preceding ones and give the symphony an arresting unity.

Recommended recording: VM-440 (B.B.C. Symphony—Vaughan Williams).

# VERDI

GIUSEPPE VERDI, b. Roncole, Parma, Italy, 1813. Showing unusual talent for music, he began studying early. In 1832, he tried to enter the Milan Conservatory, but the directors rejected his application because they felt he had no talent. For a while, Verdi studied with private teachers. In 1839, La Scala introduced his first opera, *Oberto*, which was so successful that the opera-house commissioned him to write a second work. The new opera was a failure, but the one that followed it, *Nabucco*, performed in 1842, was such a triumph that Verdi's fame was established. Other operas followed, but not until 1851 did he write the first of his acknowledged masterpieces—*Rigoletto*. Having now found his stride, he followed *Rigoletto* with *La Traviata* and *Il Trovatore*. His right to be called one of Italy's greatest opera composers could no longer be questioned. After writing *Aïda*, he took a sixteen-year holiday from opera-composing. When he returned, it was to reveal a new and deeper strain in his operatic writing with *Otello* and *Falstaff*. He died in Milan in 1901, following a paralytic stroke, and was given a funeral befitting a national hero.

VERDI's place in music history is secure. He was not only the greatest of all Italian opera composers, but one of the greatest of any country—deserving a place at the side of Mozart and Wagner. His artistic career, which spanned more than sixty years, can be divided into three distinct periods. In the first, he was obviously the apprentice, following the models of Donizetti and Bellini, struggling to achieve his own identity; the operas he wrote in this period were not good, though already his infectious melodic vein asserted itself. His second period produced those operas of his which are most famous, and culminated with *Il Trovatore* and *Aïda*. Melodic inventiveness was plentiful in these works, but, if one searched deeply, there were other things as well: a striving for dramatic truth; a groping towards characterization; an attempt towards greater unity between libretto and music. Then, after a sixteen-year hiatus, came Verdi's third period, revealing altogether new horizons in his art. This was a Verdi enriched and matured by Wagner's influence, who was now more interested in dramatic music that heightens the stage action than in melodic beauty for its own sake; who consciously sought after characterization; who was not afraid to destroy old conventions. In this third period he wrote only two operas, *Otello* and *Falstaff*, but they were the greatest operas of his career; a brilliant operatic composer had now developed into one of the greatest dramatic geniuses of all time.

"Verdi," wrote Paul Lang, "was the last great figure of Italian opera, and with him ends the lineage that started with Monteverdi. Over and above all restrictions of time and environment he once more solved the three-hundred-year-old problem of the lyric drama, of opera. . . . Verdi was ready to take any subject that provided him with living characters and was not at all interested in the authenticity of the accessories of his plots. . . . Verdi builds up not the hero but the passions of which he is carrier and victim; his men are like ourselves, fundamentally weak and self-deceiving, of consequence only in their passions and not in their acts. . . . Verdi's men and women can

be divested of their exterior, of their sixteenth-century ruffs, Egyptian tunics, Venetian armor, and Gypsy robes, for Rigoletto's pathetic impotence. Aïda's unflinching love, Iago's diabolic cunning, Othello's consuming, senseless jealousy, and Azucena's half-demented vengefulness will still remain. These constant elements in man Verdi has given us in music, in opera, which exemplifies the essence of the lyric drama: the transliteration of human emotions from a literary sketch into pure music."

## CHORAL MUSIC

### *Requiem Mass*

In 1873, the great Italian novelist, Alessandro Manzoni, died. Verdi, who venerated Manzoni "like a saint," offered to the Mayor of Milan to write a large choral work, a Requiem, in his friend's honor. "It is a heartfelt impulse," explained the composer, "or rather necessity, which prompts me to do honor as best I can to that Great One whom I so much admired as a writer and venerated as a man." The offer was accepted. On May 22, 1874, the *Manzoni Requiem* was performed under Verdi's own direction at St. Mark's Cathedral in Milan. The work was received with hysterical acclaim. Throughout Italy, performances of the Requiem took place, frequently under peculiar circumstances: in Ferrara it was played by a brass band, and in Bologna the orchestral part was assigned to four pianos. Subsequently, it was presented by a touring musical group throughout Europe.

One can well understand the hold that music had upon its public, a hold it has never relinquished. It is deeply felt and personal, reverent and poignant; obviously, Verdi had put his heart's blood into his musical tribute to his friend.

Some—in Verdi's day and in our own—have criticized the work for being operatic rather than religious. But such a condemnation is undeserved in the face of the moving intensity and deep feeling of the work as a whole, its wonderful sincerity, its shattering pathos. In this music Verdi was himself, and being himself he wrote in a vein which he had learned in the theater. Occasionally, his vocal writing is florid; as often as not it is dramatic. But there is no effect of inconsistency in the work, nothing to suggest that its style is misplaced in a Requiem.

Recommended recording: VM-734 (Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra of the Royal Opera of Rome—Serafin).

## OPERAS

### *Aida*

In four acts, book by Antonio Ghislanzoni, introduced at the Cairo Opera on December 24, 1871.

Early in 1869, Verdi was offered four thousand pounds by the Khedive

Ismail Pasha of Egypt to write an opera for the inauguration of the new opera house in Cairo to celebrate the opening of the Suez Canal. After refusing this offer twice, Verdi finally accepted, primarily because the subject (suggested by Mariette Bey, the Egyptologist) appealed so strongly to him. The subject was that used in *Aïda*, and Verdi at once detected its theatrical possibilities.

Numerous difficulties arose to delay the first performance of the new opera—principally the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War which prevented the shipment of the scenery from Paris. Verdi's new opera, therefore, could not be used to open the new Cairo opera house. However, on Christmas eve of 1871 it was eventually presented, and was given a magnificent reception. Critics had been sent from France and Italy to cover the première, and they were unanimous in proclaiming the work a masterpiece.

When *Aïda* was first performed in Italy, a few weeks later, it had a rather apathetic reception. The Italian operagoers thought that their beloved Verdi—he of the incomparable melodies—had grown overcomplicated, Wagnerian, abstruse; they did not like the exotic subject or the Oriental flavoring. But familiarity brought admiration and then love, and *Aïda* eventually became one of the best known and best admired of all Verdi operas.

Rhadames, captain of the Egyptian guard, loves the slave Aïda, daughter of the King of Ethiopia. Rhadames goes to war against the Ethiopians and is victorious, and the King is captured. The King prevails upon Aïda to get from Rhadames the plan of battle, and Aïda is successful. Overheard, Rhadames is consigned to burial alive, but when the tomb is being sealed, he finds that Aïda is with him, preferring to die at his side.

*Aïda*, wrote Brockway and Weinstock, "does not contain his best music, but is by far the cleverest evening's entertainment he ever devised. Once more the melodies flow untrammelled, and a simple and sufficiently credible story is told in broad dramatic idiom. It has the appeal of a pageant. . . . The music may not be psychologically searching, but it has a relevance to the shifting character of the stage action that would be difficult to better. There is not a dull moment in the entire opera. It is by turns exciting, moving, and simply absorbing as a spectacle. 'Big' arias and concerted numbers are scattered through the score with the prodigality of youth controlled by the firm judgment of mature experience."

The most famous single aria from the opera is, of course, "*Celeste Aïda*," sung by Rhadames in Act I. The Grand March and the Ballet Music (both from Act II) and the soprano Nile Air from Act III are also very celebrated.

Recommended recording: CM-Opera Set 3 (La Scala Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra—Molajoli).

### ***Falstaff***

In three acts, book by Arrigo Boïto, introduced at La Scala in Milan on February 9, 1893.



*Falstaff* is one of the phenomena in operatic history. That such a gay and irrepressible comedy should have been composed in Verdi's seventy-ninth year is, in itself, a miracle; few composers have revealed such freshness and youth, and such capacity to turn a new artistic leaf, so late in life. The miracle grows when we remember that it was written when Verdi was old, sick, smothered by frustrations and depressions.

The composition of this opera was a labor of love. It is said that the opening act was the result of a long and intensive study of Beethoven. In any case, Verdi expended great pains on it, and gave it a symphonic character. He worked hard on every detail, and was not afraid to undertake new adventures: the closing of the opera was an eight-part fugue! Inspired by Boito's sparkling and merry libretto (from Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*), Verdi poured into it the freshness and vitality of an inspiration, and a conscientiousness and application, that seemed unable to recognize old age.

The first performance, on February 9, 1893, was not so successful as *Otello* had been six years earlier. But musicians and critics were agreed that this was Verdi's most youthful and vigorous music, a comic opera of incomparable verve and originality.

"*Falstaff* is the very incarnation of youth and high spirits," wrote Streatfeild. . . . "He has combined a schoolboy's sense of fun with the grace and science of a Mozart. The part-writing is often exceedingly elaborate, but the most complicated concerted pieces flow on as naturally as a ballad. The glorious final fugue is an epitome of the entire work. It is really a marvel of contrapuntal ingenuity, yet it is so full of bewitching melody and healthy animal spirits that an uncultivated hearer would probably think it is nothing but an ordinary jovial finale. In the last act Verdi strikes a deeper note. He has caught the charm and mystery of the sleeping forest with exquisite art. There is an unearthly beauty about this scene, which is new to students of Verdi. In the fairy music, too, he reveals yet another side of his genius. Nothing so delicate nor so rich in imaginative beauty has been written since the days of Weber."

Falstaff, a gay fellow who thinks he is loved by all women, writes identical love notes to two women—Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page. They compare letters and decide to punish the rake. Falstaff is invited to Mrs. Ford's home. While there, he is interrupted by the arrival of Mrs. Page, and he is forced to hide in a clothes-basket which is soon afterwards emptied out of the window, to the hilarity of the people in the street. Soon after this, he invites Mrs. Ford to a rendezvous in a park. During his courtship, he is beset by Ford and his friends, who, dressed as elves and wood nymphs, attack him and give him a sound thrashing.

Recommended recording: CM-Opera Set 16 (La Scala Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra—Molajoli).

**Otello**

In four acts, book by Arrigo Boïto, première at the La Scala in Milan on February 5, 1887.

*Otello* brought to an end the sixteen-year operatic silence which Verdi had imposed upon himself. As a matter of fact, Verdi had not intended to compose any more operas. What made him change his mind was a libretto by Arrigo Boïto, the brilliant composer, critic, and poet—a libretto of such powerful dramatic writing that it induced Verdi to return into the theater. The libretto was that of *Otello*, fashioned from Shakespeare's great tragedy.

*Otello*, introduced in 1887, was a sensation. Audiences, musicians, and critics agreed that this was the greatest Verdi of all, that the composer—during his long period of silence—had grown in stature and inventiveness. *Otello* restored Verdi to the operatic limelight; once again he was—as he had been two decades earlier—the most famous composer of his time in Italy.

But it was a new Verdi who emerged in *Otello*, a Verdi who had absorbed Wagnerian influences without resorting to imitation, a Verdi who understood as never before dramatic values and the importance of the stage.

"In *Otello*," wrote Streatfeild, "Verdi advanced to undreamed-of heights of freedom and beauty. *Aïda* was a mighty step towards the light, but with *Otello* he finally shook off the trammels of convention. His inexhaustible stream of melody remained as pure and full as ever, while the more declamatory parts of the opera, down to the slightest piece of recitative, are informed by a richness of suggestion, and an unerring instinct for truth, such as it would be vain to seek in his earlier work."

The story of the passionate love of the Moor, Othello, for his beautiful white wife, Desdemona, of the insane jealousy that leads him to suspect her undeservedly and then to destroy her with his own hands, is too well known to warrant repetition in detail. The Boïto libretto follows the Shakespeare tragedy closely, except that it omits practically the entire first act.

The "Willow Song" and "Ave Maria" from Act IV are among the most famous pages in the opera, both for soprano. Almost as popular are the "Drinking Song" from Act I, Iago's "Credo" from Act II, and "Otello's Death" from Act IV.

Recommended recording: VM-152 (La Scala Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra—Sabajino).

**Rigoletto**

In three acts, book by Francesco Maria Piave, first performed at the Teatro la Fenice in Venice on March 11, 1851.

*Rigoletto* was the first of Verdi's great operas, and it enjoyed sensational success. Evidently he knew that his score had contagious appeal, for he refused to give the music of the aria "*La Donna è mobile*" to the singer until

the eve of the performance, lest that aria become known throughout Venice overnight before it had a chance to be heard in the opera house. And indeed this aria took the audience by storm and soon became as popular as Verdi had suspected it would.

But "*La Donna è mobile*" was not the only striking moment in the opera. There were many other pages which proved that Verdi had arrived as a composer for the theater. The Quartet, for example, was one of the finest examples of ensemble music in Italian opera—not only infectious music but subtle characterization at the same time. "You have here," wrote W. F. Apthorp, "Gilda's horror and despair, Rigoletto's rage, the Duke's cavalierly wooing, Maddalena's laughing coquetry; and each and all of these simultaneous, contrasted emotions are reflected in the music with a truth and vividness, with a dramatic force, that are simply incomparable. Moreover, the writing is so admirably clear that not one of these manifold accents escapes the listener."

Victor Hugo, whose play *Le Roi s'amuse* served as the basis for the libretto, originally had a strong dislike of opera in general, and always opposed any attempt to convert his drama into music; but he confessed that Verdi's *Rigoletto* music was so seductive that it had won him over completely.

Rigoletto, the hunchbacked jester of the Duke of Mantua, helps his master liquidate the husband of a Countess with whom the Duke has had an affair. Some of the courtiers decide to avenge this death by punishing the jester. They blindfold Rigoletto and tell him that they are planning to abduct the Countess and bring her to the Duke. Actually, they take Rigoletto into his own house and have him help in the abduction of his own beloved daughter, Gilda. When Rigoletto learns that his daughter has fallen into the hands of the Duke, he swears revenge. He engages an assassin to murder the Count. The assassin, however, decides to dupe Rigoletto by murdering the first person who comes into the inn, throwing him into a sack, and giving the sack to Rigoletto. The first person happens to be none other than Gilda, who has come in the disguise of a young man. Rigoletto carries the sack with the dead body for the purpose of throwing it into the river when he hears the Duke's voice. Desperately, Rigoletto looks into the sack. When he sees that he has been instrumental in killing his own daughter he dies.

*Rigoletto* is studded with wondrous jewel-like melodies. Two were mentioned above. Others include Rigoletto's monologue, "*Quel Vecchio!*" and the soprano aria "*Caro nome*" (Act I); the duet between Rigoletto and Gilda, "*Piangi, piangi, fanciulla*" from Act II.

Recommended recording: CM-Opera Set 18 (La Scala Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra—Molajoli).

### *La Traviata*

In three acts, book by Francesco Piave, introduced at the Teatro la Fenice in Venice on March 6, 1853.

In 1852 Verdi saw a dramatization of Dumas's famous novel *La Dame aux Camélias* (called *Camille* outside of France) and recognized at once its operatic possibilities. The writing of the opera took him only four weeks.

A concatenation of circumstances combined to make its première in Venice, in 1853, a fiasco. Some in the audience were shocked by its "immorality." Some were amused by the sight of a buxom and well-filled-out soprano suffering from consumption. Some found the use of contemporary costumes in poor taste. All were upset by a generally bad production. All in all, Verdi's masterpiece had an unhappy birth.

Verdi revised his score and resubmitted it to the Venetian public on May 6, 1854. This time the characters were dressed in the costumes of the Louis XIII period, and the production as a whole was magnificent. The opera was a great success; and a success it has remained.

It is amusing to recall that, in the 1850's, Verdi's opera was considered shocking in London. It was denounced from the pulpit. The London *Times* spoke of its "foul and hideous horrors." All such denunciations merely served as valuable publicity for the opera, which began to attract capacity audiences. As a matter of fact, the opera was financially so successful that it was largely responsible for rehabilitating the declining fortunes of His Majesty's Theater where it was presented.

The plot is famous. Violetta, a woman of the world, gives up her dissolute ways because of her great love for Alfred Germont. Alfred's father refuses to consider a union between the two lovers and prevails upon Violetta to give up Alfred, for his good. She returns to her own world where, met by Alfred, who is ignorant of her noble renunciation, she is spurned by him. Eventually, Alfred learns the truth, but it is too late. At Violetta's deathbed he tells her of his repentance and his great love.

"In *Traviata*," wrote Brockway and Weinstock, "Verdi wrote what has been called a 'chamber opera': in contrast to the booming heroics of *Rigoletto* and *Trovatore*, it is gauged to a credible human scale. *La Traviata* is not melodrama—it is real tragedy, even if not of the most profound sort. . . . Artistically, too, *Traviata* was a new departure for Verdi. The melody, bubbling up as profusely as ever, is more subtle and thoughtful, less blatantly catchy than that of his earlier successes."

The famous melodies and arias of *Traviata* are many: the "Drinking Song" and the soprano aria "Ah! fors e lui" from Act I; the baritone aria "*Di Provenza, il mar, il suol*" from Act II; the soprano aria, "*Addio del passato*," from Act III; and the orchestral preludes to Act I and Act III.

Recommended recording: VM-112 (La Scala Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra—Molajoli).

### *Il Trovatore*

In four acts, book by Salvatore Cammarano, première at the Teatro Apollo in Rome on January 19, 1853.

*Il Trovatore* is a veritable cornucopia of well-loved arias: the "*Miserere*," the "*Stride la vampa*," the Anvil Chorus, the Soldiers' Chorus, the "*Il balen*," the "*Ai nostri monti*." Paradoxically enough, this work—virtually unique in operatic literature for its wealth of melodies—was frowned upon by the critics who attended its première in Rome because of its alleged dearth of lyricism! The age of *bel canto* is dead, they cried. What they could not realize at the time was that in *Il Trovatore* the melody was no less rich or buoyant than in earlier Verdi operas but that it had acquired a new personality by virtue of a more cogent dramatic treatment. Beyond this, the music often helped to give a clearer outline to the characters on the stage: from the musical point of view, the character of Azucena is the most vivid and human in Italian opera up to that time.

With *Il Trovatore*, as with many another masterpiece, the public was ahead of the critics. It came to hear the opera even though the Tiber had that day overflowed, and it had to wade through mud and pools of water to reach the opera house. Discomfort and wet feet, however, did not dampen the enthusiasm of a people who loved great song and who were bewitched by the seemingly endless procession of great arias in the new opera. It cheered *Il Trovatore*, gave its composer a thunderous ovation. In Venice, three different companies performed it simultaneously to meet the great demand. Before two years had passed, it was heard in New York, Paris, and London; and wherever it came, it conquered.

A great deal has been written about the confusion of the plot. It is quite true that in his desire to cater to Verdi's desire for economy and tenseness, the librettist Cammarano (in adapting the play by Antonio Garcia Guitierrez) left out many important sequences, so that a great deal of obscurity and obfuscation prevails in the libretto. But Toye makes an important observation when he says that much of the confusion is dissipated if we take Azucena as the central character of the opera, and not Count di Luna or Leonora. As a matter of fact, Verdi expended a great deal of attention and care on the role of the vengeful mother, and his creation of that character is one of his major artistic achievements in the opera.

Count de Luna burns a gypsy because he believes that she has bewitched one of his sons. The gypsy's daughter, Azucena, tries to burn the Count's son in revenge but, by mistake, kills her own child; the Count's son is brought up among the gypsies. The opera proper begins twenty-five years after this event. The son of the Count is in love with Leonora, but he is jealous of Manrico whom Leonora loves. Manrico, who is the foster-son of Azucena, is spurred on by the vengeful gypsy to kill the Count to avenge the murder by his father. Somewhat later, Azucena is brought to the Count and accused of being a spy, and when Manrico is caught trying to save her, he and his mother are condemned to die at the stake. Leonora offers to marry the Count if she will free Manrico, then swallows poison to die at Manrico's feet. In anger, the Count orders

Manrico to be burned. As he is burning, Azucena discloses the fact that Manrico is the Count's long-lost brother.

Recommended recording: VM-106 (La Scala Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra—Sabajno).

## VIEUXTEMPS

HENRI VIEUXTEMPS, b. Verviers, Belgium, 1820. When he was seven, he made an impressive début as violinist. Charles de Bériot heard him and decided to take him under his wing. He took the boy to Paris in 1830 where they frequently gave joint concerts. Subsequently, Vieuxtemps gave concerts of his own in Paris and other European capitals and was impressively received. In 1843, he toured America, the first of three such visits. For six years he was solo violinist to the Czar, and in 1871 he was appointed professor of the violin at the Brussels Conservatory. Paralysis compelled him to give up teaching. He died near Algiers in 1881.

IN writing for the violin, Vieuxtemps was strongly influenced by Paganini. He filled his music with striking pyrotechnic effects which are frequently combined with melodic sentiments of engaging poignancy. Characteristic is the famous *Ballade et Polonaise*, Op. 38. But Vieuxtemps is most famous for his concertos for violin and orchestra, of which he wrote six. "We can search in vain," wrote Arthur Hartmann, "for works which in dramatic intensity, in daring virtuosity, and effectiveness equal the first, third, fourth and fifth concertos."

### CONCERTO

#### *Concerto No. 4 in D minor*

The Fourth Concerto, Op. 31, is the best of Vieuxtemps's six concertos, and the one most frequently heard. It is, in Hartmann's words, "a unique achievement in violinistic art, and is exemplary for its beautiful symmetry, skill and art of construction and for its wealth of noble and musically dramatic utterances."

If the first movement (Moderato) is routine music more concerned with brilliant violinistic effects than with good music, the second (Adagio religioso) is one of the most effective slow movements in Romantic violin literature, having the religious character of a hymn, and being simply and beautifully projected. The third movement (Scherzo and Trio) is rather slight, and is often omitted. A stirring subject introduces the Finale (Allegro), after which the violin enters with technical fireworks. There is repose in a brief melodic

subject in the middle of the movement, but the entire section is essentially virtuoso display music.

Recommended recording: VM-297 (Heifetz: London Philharmonic—Barbirolli).

## VILLA-LOBOS

HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS, b. Rio de Janeiro, 1881. Studied with Braga and Franca, then he toured Brazil as concert pianist. In 1912 he traveled into the interior to unearth Brazilian folk music, of which he made a profound study, and which influenced his artistic direction. His stature as a composer grew until, in 1922, he was enabled by a government endowment to go to France. Upon his return to his native country, he became prominent as educator, conductor, and composer.

HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS is the leading composer of South America, and one of the most original and provocative figures in the music of our times. It is impossible to understand his music—its savagery, its independence of style, its uniqueness of idiom—without understanding his native country Brazil. "He is deeply under the influence of his race and country," wrote Mario Pedrosa. "And for this reason he cannot be exquisite and refined, but must be impetuous and vehement, sensuous and sentimental, copious and effusive. Brazil is a new country, still at a primitive stage of evolution and very close to Nature. The actual condition of its culture still reflects the clash of races which took place on its soil. . . . Villa-Lobos, in his music, gives us the first example of actual individual creation in the history of this culture."

He has been extraordinarily fertile. He has written about fifteen hundred works, and, as is perhaps to be expected of so prolific a composer, there is dross as well as gold in his output. But at his best he is an artist of impressive stature, an original thinker, a magnetizing personality. "Of all South American composers," wrote Irving Schwerke, "none possesses a bolder, more audacious, and more inventive genius than Heitor Villa-Lobos. He is a creator of *ambiances*, of spiritual vistas. Intellectually and emotionally he is alive to the world. In his nature, the qualities of savage races and of exquisitely civilized people meet, and this union is the determining cause of rare sensibility. . . . Above all else he is a master of style. His work discloses a luxuriant at-homeness in every manner, from the classical to the most intrepid present-day practice. No matter how he expresses himself, he always gives the true essence of the formula—but never at the sacrifice of his own individual quality."

He has, of course, been strongly influenced by Brazilian folk music, of which he has made so intensive a study; within his best works he has attempted to incorporate qualities, traits, and even the physiognomy of the Brazilian folk song. For this purpose he has invented a new musical form which he calls the *Choros* and in which he has written more than a dozen different works. They are for different combinations of instruments, ranging from the solo guitar (*Choros* No. 1), to various groupings of chamber-music instruments, to choral music, and to music for large symphony orchestra. He himself has explained that his *Choros* is intended as a sort of serenade "in which are synthesized the different modalities of Brazilian, Indian, and popular music, have for principal rhythm and any typical melody of popular character."

Herbert Weinstock singles out *Choros* Nos. 6, 7, and 10 as the best of Villa-Lobos's works in this form. *Choros* Nos. 6 and 7 (1922, 1924) are for orchestra, while *Choros* No. 10 (1925) is for mixed chorus and orchestra. (For discussion of *Choros* No. 7, see below: *Orchestral Music*).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Bachianas Brasileiras*

Villa-Lobos composed five suites "in the spirit of Johann Sebastian Bach," which he called *Bachianas Brasileiras*. "This is a special kind of composition," explained the composer, "based on an intimate knowledge of the great works of J. S. Bach, and also of the composer's, with the harmonic, contrapuntal, and melodic atmosphere of the folklore of the northeastern region of Brazil. The composer considers Bach a universal and rich folkloristic source, deeply rooted in the folk music of every country in the world. Thus Bach is a mediator among races."

Though the composer consciously imitated Bach in the master's use of such forms as Prelude, Aria, Toccata, etc., the spirit of these works is essentially that of Villa-Lobos, in its rugged strength and power, in its use of native idioms and instruments.

Herbert Weinstock speaks of the *Bachiana Brasileira* No. 1 as a masterpiece because of its "largeness of scope," "persistence of movement," and "baroque richness of ornament." Hardly less impressive is the second of this set. It is in four movements, each with a subtitle: I. Prelude (Song of the Hoodlum); II. Aria (Song of Our Country); III. Danza (Woodland Memory); IV. Toccato (The Little Train to Caipira). The first movement, Adagio, exploits a baritone saxophone in combination with trombone and 'cellos in a unique instrumental effect. The second movement, Largo, contains a luxurious melody for solo 'cello. The third is built around an effective solo for trombone, while the last (written in an hour during a train ride) is descriptive of the movement of the train during its journey.

Recommended recording: VM-773 (Brazilian Festival Orchestra—Marx).



*Choros No. 7*

This is a brilliant virtuoso piece for orchestra, lush in its sonorities, glittering with pyrotechnical effects. If a Villa-Lobos Choros incorporates within itself elements of his country, what we probably have here is the delirious spirit of a Brazilian carnival. The composer gives way to his natural bent for electrifying rhythms (which have an almost jungle-like character), explosive dynamics, brilliant instrumentation. The work is a riot of sound and color. Herbert Weinstock finds in this music a suggestion of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*—particularly in the use of complicated rhythms, but adds that with Villa-Lobos the melodic resources are more fully developed.

In one movement, the Choros nevertheless has three distinct sections. An introduction develops into an orgiastic climax and then subsides into the closing section. Weinstock points out the "self-created and exactly just form" of the work, which is one of its attractive features.

## QUARTET

*Quartet No. 5 ("Brazilian")*

When questioned by an interviewer if he ever used Brazilian folk music in his works, Villa-Lobos answered: "I compose in the folk-style. I utilize thematic idioms in my own way, and subject to my own development. An artist must do this. He must select and transmit the material given him by his people. To make a potpourri of folk-melody, and think that in this way music has been created, is hopeless. But it is only nature and humanity that can lead an artist to the truth, . . . I study the history, the country, the speech, the customs, the background of the people. I have always done this, and it is from these sources, spiritual as well as practical, that I have drawn my art."

It is illuminating to bear these words in mind in hearing the *Brazilian Quartet*. It is music that owes its source to Brazilian folk art, yet never does it actually quote from folk-song sources. Like the Choros No. 7 it is virtuoso music in that it exploits dazzling tonal effects, startling harmonic combinations and boisterous sonorities. It extends the capabilities of each instrument in the production of timbre. However it is not effect but mood which is of importance here. And the mood varies from gaiety to nostalgic sadness, from rude vigor to wistfulness.

Herbert Weinstock is most impressed by the seeming spontaneity of this work, even though it is very long and complex. The music moves easily from the first bar to the last and gives the impression of having been created with consummate ease.

# VIOTTI

GIOVANNI BATTISTA VIOTTI, b. Fontanetto, Piedmont, Italy, 1753. Began the study of the violin with his father. When he was thirteen, he was engaged by the Prince della Cisterna who arranged to have the boy study with Pugnani. In 1770 Viotti set out on an extensive concert tour with his master, Pugnani. For the next twelve years he performed throughout Europe. He later became court musician for Queen Marie Antoinette in Paris; then, following the Revolution, he settled in London where he became head of the Italian Opera. Subsequently, he was active in the newly founded Royal Philharmonic Society in London. He died in London in 1824.

VIOTTI, one of the early masters of the violin concerto, is credited with being among the first to give fullness of treatment to it and to suggest the individuality of the solo instrument. He composed twenty-nine concertos, of which only one has survived, the twenty-second in A minor. Pierre Baillot, famous French violinist of the eighteenth century, said of Viotti's concertos: "They exalt the soul. It is impossible not to discover in them a poetic feeling, not to see in them some of the heroes of Homer." Another contemporary of Viotti described his concertos as follows: "His themes are splendid; they are developed with intelligence, tastefully contrasted with passages. . . . His harmonies are rich. . . . His rhythms are marked. . . . In a word, Viotti's compositions . . . are enchanting."

## CONCERTO

### *Concerto No. 22 in A minor*

Time has not touched the charm and beauty of this work, one of the happiest examples of early violin-concerto writing. The opening movement (Moderato) is prefaced by a brief orchestral introduction, following which the solo violin announces the principal theme of the movement. It is a beautiful subject, of classic repose and serenity. After a brief transition, the solo violin is heard in the second theme, equally effective. The Adagio movement is deeply touching music, the solo violin projecting the main theme immediately after a ten-measure orchestral introduction. The closing movement (Agitato assai) has a rondo-like character. The solo violin, once again, has the principal subject. A brief *tutti* leads to the second theme. A recapitulation is followed by an effective coda in which the principal materials of the movement are brought to their logical consummation.

# VIVALDI

ANTONIO VIVALDI, b. Venice, 1678. Completing church studies, he was ordained a priest in 1703. During this period, he followed music as well, achieving some note both as composer and as violinist. In 1709, he became music master of a foundling hospital for girls, composing music for its various groups, and directing its concerts. Between 1725 and 1735 he traveled throughout Europe as virtuoso and composer of operas. In 1736, he settled in Vienna where he lived in poverty. He died there in 1743.

VIVALDI was essentially the master of the concerto form, and it is through his solo concertos for violin and particularly his concerti grossi for orchestra that he is remembered and honored today. It is well-known, for example, that Johann Sebastian Bach admired Vivaldi's works so profoundly that he arranged sixteen of the violin concertos for piano, four for organ, and one for four pianos and string quartet.

With Corelli, Vivaldi stands as one of the forefathers of the modern concerto form. In his voluminous writings in this field—for violin, for piano, and for orchestra—he brought the form to altogether new stages of technical development in which the structure was amplified and filled with artistic and poetic expressions not found even in Corelli.

Discussing Vivaldi's historic importance, Parry wrote: "Vivaldi represents the tendency of Italian art toward harmonic form, such as were met with in Italian opera, in which, so far, simple clearness of design and superficial effectiveness were the principal virtues. He was essentially a violinist, and at times, especially in slow movements when the aptness of the violin for expressive melody invited him, he wrote really beautiful music."

After Vivaldi's death practically all of his music disappeared into obscurity, lying forgotten in libraries. It is only within comparatively recent years that it has returned to public attention to assert its deserved importance in the repertory of great music.

## CONCERTOS

### Concertos for Orchestra

Two major sets of concerti grossi by Vivaldi are of particular prominence. The first of these, Op. 3, is entitled *L'Estro armonico* (Harmonic Inspiration) and comprises twelve works. It was published in Amsterdam in 1714 and 1716.

One of these works, the eleventh (D minor) is popular at symphony concerts, and is one of the greatest of Vivaldi's works in this vein. It opens (Allegro) with a robust subject which is tossed about among the various branches of the strings and emerges finally in a powerful climax. The slow movement (Intermezzo) is one of the most sublime and moving pages of music to be found in the literature before Bach, a pastoral song of a soaring and eloquent

beauty which is reminiscent of Bach at his greatest. The final movement (Allegro) comes in a powerful sweep to bring the concerto to a magnetizing close.

The second major set of concerti grossi is the Op. 8 (also published in Amsterdam at an unknown date). This was called by the composer *Il Cimento dell' Armonia e dell' Inventioni* (The Trial of Harmony and Invention). The first quartet of works in this opus is subtitled, in turn, *Le Quattro Stagioni* (The Four Seasons), and represents some of the most felicitous program writing to be found in music. Vivaldi appended to each of these concerti a sonnet of his own creation which was intended to indicate the program of his music. In the first concerto, Spring, we hear the singing of birds, the bubbling of fountains, and the pastoral pipings of shepherds. In Summer, the song of the cuckoo is prominent, and with it the cooings of turtledoves; the program here becomes explicit enough to describe the slumbering of a shepherd disturbed by flies! Autumn gives a picture of Bacchus and a hunting scene, and Winter recreates the cold (we hear the chattering of teeth in the music!) and describes a perilous walk on ice.

The modern Italian conductor, Bernardino Molinari, adapted these four "seasonal" concertos for modern orchestras, and in this version these works have been widely heard.

Recommended recordings: Concerto in A major, No. 5 "L'Estro armonico" arr. for string quartet, V-8827 (Pro-Arte); Concerto in D minor, No. 11 "L'Estro armonico," V-14113-4, (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

### Violin Concertos

Vivaldi composed a dozen concertos for violin solo and chamber orchestra, but those that are best known today are the four that Nachez transcribed and adapted: A minor, G minor, G major, B-flat major. In considering Vivaldi's violin concertos it is essential to recall once again the character of the old concerto. Here, solo instrument is not exploited for its virtuosity and individuality, but is used as a part of the orchestral texture, sometimes in contrast with the orchestra, sometimes in combination with it. It is nothing more than the adaptation of the concerto grosso principles to solo writing.

In these concertos adapted by Nachez, Vivaldi's style is "rich, natural, and learned," in the words of Julien Tiersot. "The exposition of his allegros has a great freshness, and their developments evolve with perfect logic and irreproachable feeling for outline. His slow movements form the central part of his concerto, offering varied and theretofore unheard beauties."

Recommended recording: Concerto in G minor, V-7585-6 (Elman; Symphony Orchestra—Collingwood).

# WAGNER

RICHARD WILHELM WAGNER, b. Leipzig, 1813. Wagner's paternity has been subject to question, and it is the recent studied opinion of Ernest Newman that the composer was really the son of the actor Ludwig Geyer and Johanna Wagner. Richard's early music study was spasmodic under a variety of private teachers. In 1833 he became chorusmaster at the Würzburg Theater, and while there composed his first complete opera, *Die Feen*; as in all his future operas, the libretto was of his own creation. Various posts as conductor followed, after which he settled in Paris doing hack work. Performances of his operas *Rienzi* and *The Flying Dutchman* in Dresden in 1842 and 1843 were so successful that Wagner was appointed musical director of the Saxon Court. It was in this post that he composed *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*. Active in the revolutionary movement of 1849, Wagner had to flee out of Germany to escape arrest. Settling in Zurich, he began intensive literary work, including the text of the Nibelungen ring. He also worked upon his music-dramas *Tristan und Isolde* and the *Ring*. In 1860 a political amnesty enabled him to return to Germany; and soon after this King Ludwig II of Bavaria invited him to Munich with offers of help in the mounting of Wagner's music dramas. *Tristan* was produced in Munich in 1865. In 1870, Wagner married Cosima, daughter of Liszt and ex-wife of Hans von Bülow. In 1876, Wagner's life-dream came to fulfillment with the opening of his own Festival Theater in Bayreuth, consecrated to his music dramas. Wagner died in Venice in 1883, a year after the première of his last opera in Bayreuth, *Parsifal*.

WITH Wagner, leadership in the world of opera was transferred from Italy to Germany. There are not many who will deny that Wagner was one of the greatest composers (if not *the* greatest) for the theater: the man to bring the operatic form to heights of artistic development far beyond anything realized before. He expressed himself in dramatic language as naturally as other composers wrote absolute music in the sonata form. His music had subtlety of characterization, authenticity of atmosphere, dramatic impact, and an incomparable feeling for climaxes. His librettos (which he wrote himself) were filled with fine poetry and sound theatrical elements, glorifying German mythology and legends. His music-dramas stand in towering majesty in operatic music; there is nothing like them, in either aspiration or realization. He created his own dramatic form, and then proceeded to fill it with vital, compelling speech.

He sought to revolutionize the opera by making it a fusion of the arts: dramatic, musical, and scenic. If he was not altogether successful—for his librettos certainly do not measure up to the standards of his scores—at least he went a long distance in the direction he had set for himself. His are music-dramas in the finest and most exacting meaning of the term. He swept aside the stilted operatic conventions that prescribed the use of set numbers, arias, and ensembles, achieving an integral flow of melody which coursed uninterruptedly from the beginning of the opera to the end; at the same time he progressed measurably beyond Weber in making the recitative (in his hands a flexible instrument for dramatic expression) the backbone of the work. He brought dignity and artistic truth to the libretto. He succeeded in arriving at integration, through the elaborate use of the *Leit-motif* (a leading musical

motive that identifies a character, a setting, an emotion or mood, and which returns throughout whenever that character or mood is referred to or reappears). He brought symphonic writing into the opera; his orchestra is, in truth, a central character, interpreting, explaining, underlining the action on the stage. His musical writing is always spacious, rising completely to meet the demands of his theories and concepts. He arrived at a complete articulateness and expressiveness of music; in this he was truly Beethoven's heir, and it has been justly said that he brings the Beethoven symphony (of which he was a profound student) into the theater.

With such musical means, of which he was the consummate master, and with his poetic librettos rich with philosophic overtones, he created a truly Germanic art of fabulous proportions.

"Analyzing . . . the components of Wagner's art," wrote Hugo Leichtentritt, "we perceive that he made use of Beethoven's symphony as regards constructive principles, of Weber's feeling for the moods of nature, of Meyerbeer's theatrical virtuosity. When one considers the poetry of his drama, one notes its dependence on the romantic ideas of the age . . . The great romantic wave of medieval national poetry, of Germanic mythology and archæology, the great new achievements of literary and historical research had awakened Wagner's enthusiastic interest. Jacob Grimm's studies in the comparative grammar of the Germanic languages, the philological researches on the medieval epics, the *Eddas* and the *Nibelungenlied*, and Karl Lachmann's editions of Middle High German poetry, of Wolfram von Eschenbach, Walther von der Vogelweide, Gottfried von Strassburg, and other poets of the chivalric age—all these opened Wagner's eyes and gave him a clear insight into the old Germanic mythology and poetry. This enumeration of the various sources of Wagner's art is fairly exhaustive if we add one other trait which at first sight looks rather unromantic: his enthusiasm for ancient Greek drama."

Not even his most enthusiastic admirers will deny that there are weaknesses in the Wagnerian dramas. He was too frequently prolix, bombastic, pompous. His dramatic action suffers too frequently from over-elaborate and repetitious monologues to explain the background of the action. However, despite his faults, he remained one of the supreme creators of the operas, and one of the fabulous figures in the history of music. Single-handed he evolved a new operatic form. His luxuriously rich harmonic and contrapuntal writing, his orchestral colorings and instrumentation, his dramatic idiom, all influenced an entire generation of composers throughout the world. This influence swept like a tidal wave through the world of music; few could help being borne along on it. "All composers after 1870 spoke and still speak the language of Wagner," as Franz Werfel wrote, "with variants that will be blurred a hundred years hence. Even the cacophonies and rhythmic spasms of ultra-modern music spring from an effort to burn Wagner's language out of the blood-stream by an artificial fever."

Most important of all, however, he created a world of enchantment which

is his own—the world of Siegfried and Brünnhilde, Tristan and Isolde, Hans Sachs and Eva, Parsifal and Kundry, which has enthralled lovers of great art for half a century and will continue to exert its potent appeal and fascination for a long time to come.

## OPERAS

### *The Flying Dutchman*

In three acts, libretto by the composer, première at the Dresden Opera on January 2, 1843.

While in *The Flying Dutchman* Wagner is subject to the influence of Weber, his forceful personality asserts itself strongly. It is his first opera in which the voice of a genius can be recognized; for *Rienzi*, which preceded it, is too artificial and pompous, too much given to Meyerbeer pomp and pagantry to be considered a characteristic Wagnerian product.

*The Flying Dutchman* was composed at a period in Wagner's life when he, too, was a wanderer; and it is more than probable that Wagner identified himself with the legendary Dutch navigator who was fated to wander over the face of the earth until he found a woman who would love him until death. Like the captain of the *Flying Dutchman* ship, Wagner at that time sought two things: the rest that comes with settling in one's own homeland, and the satisfaction and peace that can arrive only when one has found a good wife. The legend, which he read in Heine's *Memoirs of Herr von Schnabelewopski*, gripped him at once. But it became for him something intimate and personal when, in 1839, he took a small boat from Riga to London. The trip was a stormy one, and full of hazard; the sailors regarded him and his wife (their only passengers) as the reason for the bad luck. Inevitably, the trip brought vividly to Wagner's mind the story of the Wandering Dutchman, and it was during this boat trip that he outlined his libretto.

In Paris, he found the directors of the Opéra deaf to his project of composing an opera for them. Instead, they offered to purchase his outlines of *The Flying Dutchman* for the use of one of their own composers. Sadly in need of money, Wagner had to sell his project; and thus *The Flying Dutchman*, an opera by a man named Dietsch, was produced at the Paris Opéra in 1842.

But the sale did not preclude Wagner's right to create a work on the same subject. The news that his opera *Rienzi* had been produced successfully in Dresden gave him further encouragement. He wrote the score of the new work in seven weeks, and by October 1841 the *Dutchman* was completed.

Though originally accepted for Berlin, the new opera was given its première at Dresden on January 2, 1843. It was not so successfully received as *Rienzi* had been. *Rienzi* was colorful, glamorous; *The Flying Dutchman* was gloomy and somber. But, more important still, *Rienzi* had been an opera in the old traditions, while *The Flying Dutchman* was the first attempt at music-drama.

The new form puzzled the Dresden opera lovers and left them with a feeling of dissatisfaction.

"From a purely musical point of view," wrote Paul Landormy, "*The Flying Dutchman* marks Wagner's break with the ancient operatic forms; there are no more numbers detached one from the other, and joined together as well as circumstances permit, to make a veritable Harlequin's suit, devoid of continuity and succession. The music-drama becomes a symphony built up on one or more themes which have a poetic or dramatic significance—the *Leit-motif*. In place of juxtaposing themes which are always new and different, the composer develops a small number of ideas closely linked together by the bonds of polyphony."

*The Flying Dutchman* is a phantom ship commanded by Vanderdecken. He had vowed that he would double the Cape of Good Hope through a raging storm even if it took him all eternity. As punishment for so rash a vow, the Devil compels him to sail without respite until he finds a woman who will be faithful to him till death. In a Norwegian port the Dutchman comes upon Senta, who loves him and wishes to marry him, even though she is betrothed to Erik. When the Dutchman sees her talking to Erik, he suspects she is not the faithful woman who will redeem him, and he sails away. But Senta commits suicide, proving her fidelity. This frees Vanderdecken from his curse. His phantom ship disappears and he rises to heaven with his beloved Senta.

Wagner himself explained that most of the music of the opera is built out of the germ found in the celebrated "Senta's Ballad." "I well remember that before passing on to a realization, properly speaking, of *The Flying Dutchman*, I composed the text and melody of 'Senta's Ballad' in the second act. Unconsciously, I deposited in this number the thematic germs of the entire score. It was a concentrated image of the whole drama as it outlined itself in my thoughts. . . . When, finally, I passed on to composition, the thematic image which I had conceived opened out of its own accord, like a kind of network, over the whole score. And without my actually willing it, so to speak, it was sufficient for me to develop, in a sense conformable to their nature, the various themes contained in the ballad, in order to have before me, in the form of well-characterized thematic constructions, the musical image of the principal lyric situations in the work."

The overture to the opera is famous. It was the last part to be written and was intended as a sort of summation of the action of the entire work. It is built from two principal motives heard throughout—that of the Curse and that of Senta. The overture also includes a vivid description of the storm, a sailor's song, and a theme suggesting the Dutchman. "Senta's Ballad," in Act II, is equally well known.

Recommended recordings: Overture, CM-X107 (London Philharmonic—Beecham); "Spinning Chorus," V-7117 (Walker; Royal Opera Chorus and Orchestra—Barbirolli).



*Lohengrin*

In three acts, book by the composer, introduced at the Weimar Opera on August 28, 1850.

Though *Lohengrin* belongs to the earlier Wagner (it followed *The Flying Dutchman* and *Tannhäuser*) it is a masterpiece, the work of a consummate master even if the Wagnerian music-drama did not yet reach here its realization. Ernest Newman wrote that if Wagner had died after writing *Lohengrin*, he "would still have been the greatest operatic composer of his time." It is one of Wagner's most beautifully melodic works and has some of his most sensitive and grateful vocal writing as well as orchestration. It is the last of the Wagnerian "operas"—and, in abandoning the old form, he proved once and for all that he was its master. It is good theater and good music. Yet it is much more than a conventional opera. It has integration, dramatic truth, and a power which are unmistakably Wagnerian fingerprints.

Like *The Flying Dutchman*, the central theme of *Lohengrin* is man's search for a woman who trusts him implicitly and is faithful to him to the end. Lohengrin begs Elsa not to try to learn his identity, and when she does so—and he yields—he is compelled to leave her forever. One of the strong points of the opera is the effective use of *Leit-motif*: the theme "*Nie sollst du mich befragen*" is used with overpowering effect throughout the entire opera.

Elsa von Brabant, unjustly accused of the murder of Gottfried, submits as her champion a knight she has seen in a dream. He is Lohengrin, who arrives sailing on a swan and stands ready to fight Elsa's accuser, Telramund, to clear her name. But he imposes one restriction: Elsa must never inquire who he is. He defeats Telramund, and marries Elsa. Elsa's curiosity proves too great, and she demands to know who he really is. He tells her: he is a knight of the Holy Grail, the son of Parsifal. But, having told her, he must leave her forever. The swan reappears to bear him away. When the spell is broken, the swan proves to be Gottfried. Lohengrin disappears in a boat, and Elsa dies.

*Lohengrin* was introduced at Weimar by Franz Liszt in 1850, which marks Liszt's first espousal of the cause of Wagner to which he was later to consecrate his life.

One of the most inspired pages in the entire opera is the prelude, a masterpiece which contains (in its divided violins) one of Wagner's most sustained flights to sublimity. Wagner's own interpretation of this prelude is as follows: "Out of the clear blue ether of the sky there seems to condense a wonderful, yet at first hardly perceptible, vision; and out of this there gradually emerges, ever more and more clearly, an angel host bearing in its midst the sacred Grail. As it approaches earth it pours out exquisite odors, like streams of gold, ravishing the senses of the beholder. The glory of the vision grows and grows until it seems as if the rapture must be shattered and dispersed by the very vehemence of its own expansion. The vision draws nearer, and the climax

is reached when at last the Grail is revealed in all its glorious reality, radiating fiery beams and shaking the soul with emotion. The beholder sinks on his knees in adoring self-annihilation."

The Bridal Chamber Scene (or Wedding March) is one of the most celebrated passages in all opera, and certainly the most famous piece of wedding music. It is heard at the opening of Act III, to accompany the bridal procession of Elsa and Lohengrin.

"Elsa's Dream" (Act I) and Lohengrin's recital, "*In fernem Land*" (Act III) are also frequently heard.

Recommended recordings: Prelude to Act I, V-14006 (New York Philharmonic—Toscanini); Elsas Traum, V-14181 (Flagstad); Königs Gebet: "*Mein Herr und Gott*," C-7280M (Kipnis); "*Euch Lüften, die mein Klagen*," V-1901 (Flagstad); Prelude Act III, V-14007 (New York Philharmonic—Toscanini); Bridal Chamber Scene, VM-897, (Flagstad; Melchior; Victor Symphony—MacArthur); "*In fernem Land*," V-17726 (Melchior); Abschied von Elsa, V-15213 (Melchior).

### *Die Meistersinger*

In three acts, book by the composer, première at the Munich Opera on June 21, 1868.

Having composed an opera about the minnesingers (*Tannhäuser*), Wagner almost inevitably turned to the successors of this group of knightly poets of twelfth-century Germany. He completed *Tannhäuser* in 1844, and in 1845 he was already revolving in his mind the idea of writing an opera about the Meistersinger. These "Mastersingers" flourished in Germany between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries—middle-class poets and musicians who grouped themselves in societies resembling the craft guilds of the time. They wrote their poems and songs according to strict rules firmly set down, divergence from which was looked upon with disfavor. Wagner planned to make his new opera a contrast to the old. *Tannhäuser* had been a tragedy; *Die Meistersinger* would be a comedy. *Tannhäuser* had dealt with an aristocratic group; *Die Meistersinger* would concern itself with the people.

But between the first plans and the final creation, two decades elapsed. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* was completed in 1867, and it was introduced in Munich under the baton of Hans von Bülow one year later.

The knight, Walther von Stolzing, is in love with Eva, but her father has decided that only he who can win a song-contest may have her hand. A rival for Eva is the pretentious and crafty Beckmesser. In a preliminary round, Walther is eliminated because his song is full of errors, and because his judge is none other than Beckmesser. At the contest, Beckmesser makes himself ridiculous by singing an absurd tune. The philosopher-cobbler, Hans Sachs, insists that Walther be given his turn. Walther sings his "Prize Song" and emerges victor.

It is not difficult to find the message which Wagner intended in this theme. Wagner was annihilating those who insisted upon producing art according

to rules and formulas, and tries to show that with independent thinking and freedom an artist can create greatness. Wagner was also excoriating the self-appointed judges of art: the critics. It is known that, in portraying the character Beckmesser, he had in mind the famous Viennese critic, Eduard Hanslick. (Indeed, in the original version this character was named "Hans Lick.")

"*Die Meistersinger* is a comic opera," wrote Howes and Hope-Wallace. "But it is still symphonic drama without spoken dialogue. Its hero is Hans Sachs, the poet cobbler of Luther's Reformation—the chorale tune in which the crowd acclaim him at the end of the opera belongs to the hymn with which the historical Sachs greeted Luther in his poem, *The Wittenberg Nightingale*. . . . He is in true Wagnerian fashion the embodiment of a theory. . . . But Sachs is no mere personification of abstract ideas; he is a man whose humanity gives to a singer rich opportunities of interpretation. . . . For the revelation of his character, Wagner assigns him two monologues, '*The Elder's Scent*' in the second act, and '*Wahn! Wahn!*' in the third; in the first act he is only gradually differentiated from the other masters, in the finale he dominates all Nürnberg gathered in the meadows on the Feast of St. John. Sachs is in fact Wagner's most striking creation."

Of the music, W. J. Henderson wrote that its principal characteristic is "its lyric quality. There are no tragic passions to be depicted, no evil thoughts to be expressed. Beckmesser alone has malice, and that is of a petty, foolish sort, best treated, as it is in this exquisite work, with ridicule. The other personages are all lovable; the motives all kindly. The underlying elements which are in contest, the opposing principles whose workings make the ethical basis of the drama, are artistic, the old against the new, the formal against the free. The expression of each must of necessity be lyric, the one in well-regulated rhythms, the other in rushing bursts of apparently spontaneous melody. But the total result is one great spring ode, throbbing with the very heart-beats of young poesy and song, and sure at all times and in all places to captivate those who have ears to hear and souls to understand."

The Prelude to the opera is one of Wagner's most majestic pages. With extraordinary skill he combines the principal motives of the opera into an elaborate contrapuntal network which projects the Renaissance pomp and ceremony of the Mastersingers' guild. In marked contrast is the Prelude to Act III—music of mellow philosophic musing—in which is described Hans Sachs's aspiration to spiritual happiness through renunciation.

The famous "Prize Song," with which Walther wins the song contest and his bride, is first heard in Act II, when Walther sings it to Hans Sachs after telling him that it came to him in a dream. It is heard once again during the contest in Act III.

Frequently heard at symphony concerts is the joyous and spirited "Dance of the Apprentices"—a dance performed in the final scene of the opera. Besides the excerpts mentioned above, Sachs's two monologues, (the "*Fliedermönolog*"

in Act II, and the "*Wahnmonolog*" from Act III), and the Quintet from Act III are deservedly well known.

Recommended recordings: complete Act III, VM-357-8 (Dresden State Opera Soloists, Chorus, Orchestra—Bohm).

Prelude to Act I, VM-731 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski); "*Kirchenchor*," C-69095D (Covent Garden Chorus; London Philharmonic—Beecham), "*Pogner's Address*," V-7894 (Kipnis); "*Am stillen Herd*," V-17728 (Melchior); "*Fliehermonolog*," V-7425 (Schorr); "*Gut'n Abend, Meister!*," V-7680 (Ljungberg; Schorr); "*Schusterlied*," V-7426 (Schorr).

### *Parsifal*

In three acts, book by the composer, première at the Festival Theater in Bayreuth on July 26, 1882.

As in the case of *Die Meistersinger*, the idea of writing an opera about the knights of the Holy Grail came to Wagner several decades before he actually set to work on it intensively. As early as 1845 he had come across the Parsifal theme in the poetry of the minnesinger Wolfram von Eschenbach, but *Parsifal* was not completed until 1879.

When finally composed, *Parsifal* not only realized Wagner's ambition to utilize the legend in a music-drama, but also it partly carried out his life-dream of writing an opera about Jesus Christ. *Parsifal* was designated by Wagner as "a consecrational festival play." It is therefore more than a theatrical work: it is a religious play, touched with other-world spirituality.

Though the last of Wagner's operas, it is not his greatest. It is too diffuse; it moves too often at a snail's pace as one long monologue after another unfolds Wagner's religious and philosophic tenets. But it has magnificent music, which achieves a note of sublimity not often encountered in his other works. It is also one of his most skillfully contrived works. "In none of Wagner's music-dramas has he carried out his musical system with greater skill or certainty of touch than in *Parsifal*," wrote Richard Aldrich. "In none has he exhibited a higher mastery in the fashioning of the musical texture from leading motives, in the suggestiveness and logical completeness with which he has done it, or in the sonority, richness and mellowness of the orchestral garb with which he has clothed the score. In thematic invention the *Ring* dramas and *Die Meistersinger* may surpass it; in spontaneity it stands below *Tristan*; but the poetical beauty and subtlety of the *Parsifal* music, the expressive power with which it interprets all the characters, emotions, sufferings, aspirations, that are embodied in the drama, are surpassed in none other of Wagner's works. In none of them is the key to the understanding of all to be sought so continually in the music. As Ernest Newman has pointed out, this wonderful series of tone pictures has a veracity to which no other musician could ever have attained; his unrivalled power of conceiving life and character in terms of music is triumphantly shown in such figures as Parsifal, Kundry, and Amfortas."

As Pitts Sanborn wrote: "The religious message of *Parsifal* is derived from

both Christian doctrine and Buddhism. Suffering, compassion, service, renunciation are its component parts. The ethical idea has been expressed thus: 'Enlightenment coming through conscious pity brings salvation.'

On the heights of Montsalvat, the Knights of the Holy Grail guard two holy relics: the spear with which Christ was pierced, and the Cup from which He drank at the Last Supper and which contains the blood He shed at the Cross. Their leader, Amfortas, lies ill, and he can be cured only if one pure of heart will touch his wound with the holy spear. While seeking this man, Amfortas enters a forest in which the magician Klingsor keeps a company of beautiful maidens to seduce pure men. Klingsor steals Amfortas's spear. Soon Parsifal comes into the wood, but resists the lure of the maiden Kundry. Klingsor throws the magic spear at him, but it remains suspended in mid-air. Parsifal seizes the spear and proceeds with it to the Grail Castle, after his feet had been washed by Kundry. There he touches Amfortas's wound, which is instantly healed.

Wagner composed the work for his theater in Bayreuth, and there—amid great ceremony—it was introduced one year before the master's death. Its first performance outside of Bayreuth took place at the Metropolitan Opera House just two decades later. And thereby hangs a tale. Wagner had explicitly specified that no opera house, outside of his theater in Bayreuth, was to produce *Parsifal* for fifty years. Cosima, therefore, rushed to the law courts to prevent the Metropolitan performance. In the litigation that followed, *Parsifal* became the most publicized and hotly disputed musical work of many years (until *Salome* in 1907). The curiosity of the country was piqued, and when the Metropolitan won its legal right to present the opera, the sale of tickets reached prodigious proportions. Special *Parsifal* excursion trains were run to bring out-of-town music lovers to the performances. For the rest of the season *Parsifal* remained the most exciting opera in the repertoire. In place of the originally scheduled five performances there were eleven, bringing \$200,000 in receipts. The opera was presented in major cities throughout the country by "road" companies—the Savage production (in English), for instance, and one by Walter Damrosch. Drama lectures on *Parsifal* were conducted with stereopticon slides.

The *Parsifal* Prelude is, as Aldrich wrote, "an initiation into the sacred mysteries of which the drama is the elucidation. It at once takes us into the characteristic mood and atmosphere of the play—the mood of solemnity and reverential awe. It has been compared to the Prelude of *Lohengrin*; the poetic subjects of the two have much in common, but there is nothing of the passionate eloquence, the dramatic intensity, of the *Lohengrin* prelude in that of *Parsifal*. The difference, it has been observed, resides in the more epic treatment that fills the prelude to *Parsifal* with a more contemplative calm, as well as in the more solemn subject of the drama."

Other famous orchestral excerpts from *Parsifal* include the "Transformation Scene"—the music accompanying the changing of scenes in Act I from the forest near Montsalvat to the interior of the Grail Castle; the sensuous "Flower

Maidens' Music" of Act II in which Parsifal resists the enticements of Klingsor's maidens; and the spiritual "Good Friday Spell" from Act III, in which Parsifal is recognized as a new knight of the Holy Grail and is bathed in preparation for his entrance into the Grail Castle.

Recommended recording: Symphonic synthesis (containing some of the principal excerpts from the opera arranged in orchestral form by Stokowski), V-8617-8 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

Prelude and Good Friday Music, VM-514 (Berlin Philharmonic—Furtwängler); Transformation Scene, C-67365-7D (Bayreuth Festival Orchestra, Chorus—Muck); Flower Maidens' Scene, C-67368D, (Bayreuth Festival Orchestra and Chorus—Muck); "*Ich sah das Kind*," V-17223 (Thorborg); "*Anfortas, die Wunde!*," V-15212 (Melchior); "*Nur eine Waffe taugt*," V-15213 (Melchior).

### *The Ring of the Nibelung*

It is Lawrence Gilman's opinion that *The Ring of the Nibelung* is both the noblest and the hugest work ever attempted by the creative mind. Though called a tetralogy, it really comprises four music-dramas. The first, *Das Rheingold*, is in the nature of a prelude, or "fore-evening." The three principal music-dramas are: *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried*, and *Die Götterdämmerung*.

The four plays were written in reverse order: i. e., *Die Götterdämmerung* came first, and *Das Rheingold* last. Having interested himself in the German legends which he had read in German and Scandinavian sagas, and having decided to compose a music-drama about the hero Siegfried, in 1848 Wagner wrote a poetic drama entitled *Siegfried's Death*. He then felt that this poem required a second one to explain the action that had preceded it; and so he wrote *The Young Siegfried*—still, be it noted, literary work with no music. *Die Walküre*, and, finally, *Das Rheingold* were then written to complete the story—again poetic drama without music as yet. The music for *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, and part of *Siegfried* was composed between 1854 and 1856. Then Wagner dropped this task for thirteen years (to write, meanwhile, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Meistersinger*). In 1869, he completed *Siegfried*; and by 1874 the entire tetralogy was complete, with the finishing of *Die Götterdämmerung*. It was a Herculean achievement, the fulfillment of which required the energy, imagination, and horizon of a man who had in him a touch of the Superman.

The general theme underlying the *Ring* has been briefly outlined by Pitts Sanborn, and it is not difficult to recognize even in this brief summary the social and philosophic implications that Wagner inserted into his drama. "The individual tragedy of one and another is related and subordinated to the tragedy of the world that is their undoing. Wotan, king of the Norse gods, is avid for power, and in token of that power he has had constructed as the dwelling place for himself, his wife Fricka, and their kindred deities the mighty castle of Valhalla. But Wotan's greed remains unsatisfied, and greed it is that brings the downfall of his arrogant race. From the Rhine Daughters deep in the river, Alberich the Nibelung filches their gold and fashions from it a

ring which is the symbol of all power. When the desperate Wotan obtains the ring from him by trickery, he curses the gold, which all who have it not shall covet and he who has it shall cling to as to his very life. To atone for Wotan's sin and divert the approaching dusk of the gods a free and fearless hero must arise as the untrammelled agent of reparation. Intent on the creation of such a hero, Wotan goes among the daughters of men and begets the race of the Volsungs. To his twin children Siegmund and Sieglinde is born Siegfried, the free and fearless hero designate. With his adventures the rest of the story of the *Ring* is concerned."

W. H. Hadow has discussed the four operas of the *Ring* as follows; "*Das Rheingold* is undoubtedly the weakest, *Siegfried* undoubtedly the finest. The latter, indeed, is the strongest in construction and the most vigorous in workmanship of all Wagner's creations, and its gold is studded with such gems as the '*Schmiedelied*,' the '*Waldweben*,' and the magnificent duet on which the *Siegfried Idyll* was subsequently founded. *Die Walküre* is a very unequal work. It contains, perhaps, as many supremely fine numbers as *Siegfried* itself; but, except for the closing scene, the second act is rather tedious, and some of the other monologues stand in need of judicious curtailment. *Götterdämmerung* gives a little the impression that its first two acts were written for the sake of the third. But the whole scene of Siegfried's death, the superb funeral march, in which *motif* after *motif* tells the story of the murdered hero, the blazing pyre upon which Brünnhilde dies amid the wreck of Valhalla, and the overthrow of the very gods themselves, these form a climax of epic grandeur, presented with a vividness of reality which no epic can ever attain."

As mentioned below, *Rheingold* and *Walküre* had had their premières in 1869 and 1870 respectively; but *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* were presented first when the entire *Ring von der Nibelung* was given at Bayreuth in 1876 at the inaugural festival opening Wagner's theater there. Hans Richter conducted; the concertmaster of the orchestra was the famous violinist Wilhelmj. The most scrupulous care had gone into the preparation of the Gargantuan masterpiece. A brilliant audience, from every part of the world, acclaimed the *Ring* and saw it as a complete justification of Wagner's theories and aspirations.

### I. *Das Rheingold*

In four scenes, book by the composer, introduced at the Munich Opera on September 22, 1869.

The Rhinegold, hidden beneath the waters of the Rhine, is guarded by the Rhine maidens. Alberich, a Nibelung, hears from the maidens that whoever will forge the gold into a ring will rule the world, and he snatches it away. The scene changes to Valhalla where Wotan and Fricka are having a new palace built for them. The giants who build the palace demand their payment—Freia, goddess of love and beauty. Wotan is reluctant to give her to them, and they agree to accept a substitute, the

ring possessed by Alberich, about which they have heard from Loge, the fire-god. The gods descend into Nibelheim, the home of the Nibelungs, to get the ring. They acquire it through guile and Alberich curses the ring, vowing that death and destruction will come to whoever wears it. As soon as the ring passes on to the giants, its curse begins to work. The giants fight among themselves for its possession, and one of them is killed. The gods now ascend into Valhalla, while below, in the Rhine, the maidens bewail the loss of their gold.

The prelude of *Das Rheingold* is of the most original of all operatic overtures. It is built on a single chord, from which the strains of melody slowly evolve to depict the slow flowing of the river Rhine. "The rushing sound formed itself in my brain into a musical sound, the chord of E-flat major, which continually re-echoed in broken forms; these broken chords seemed to be melodic passages of increasing motion, yet the pure triad of E-flat major never changed but seemed by its continuance to impart infinite significance to the element in which I was sinking," wrote Wagner. "I awoke in sudden terror from my doze, feeling as though the waves were rushing high above my head. I at once recognized that the orchestral overture to *Das Rheingold*, which must have long lain latent within me . . . had at last been revealed to me. I then quickly realized my own nature; the stream of life was to flow to me not from without, but from within."

"The Entrance of the Gods into Valhalla," so often heard at symphony concerts, comprises the music which closes the opera, accompanying the majestic ascent of the gods into their new palace in Valhalla. Its principal thematic material includes the Rhine motif and the grandiose motif of Valhalla, with which the composition is grandiloquently closed.

Recommended recording: symphonic synthesis, an orchestral arrangement of principal material of the opera by Stokowski, VM-179 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

"Erda's Warning," V-17221 (Thorborg).

## II. *Die Walküre*

In three acts, book by the composer, introduced at the Munich Opera, on June 26, 1870.

Having come down to earth to beget a hero who will win the ring from the giant (who has transformed himself into a dragon and is guarding it jealously), Wotan becomes the father of the Volsung twins, Siegmund and Sieglinde. In a violent storm, Siegmund (separated from Sieglinde) comes to the house of Hunding for protection. Hunding's wife is none other than Sieglinde. Not recognizing each other, they fall in love. Sieglinde tells Siegmund about a stranger who had come into their home and implanted a sword in a tree, saying that whoever could remove it could keep it. Siegfried removes it, and they leave Hunding's home. They come to a mountainous country, where Wotan hopes to protect Siegmund in his coming fight with Hunding. Fricka, entrusted with the rights of marriage, persuades Wotan not to do so. However, Brünnhilde, daughter of



Wotan, disobeys her father's orders and protects him. Wotan intervenes, plunges his spear between Hunding and Siegmund, and thereby enables Hunding to deliver a death blow to his opponent. Brünnhilde takes Sieglinde under her wing, and guides her to a forest where she can hide and give birth to her child. Meanwhile Wotan, enraged that his daughter has disobeyed him, banishes her from Valhalla forever. To protect her, however, he permits her to sleep within a circle of fire, stipulating that she will awaken to become the bride of the man who will pierce the ring of fire to rouse her.

The orchestral excerpts most famous in *Die Walküre* include the electrifying "Ride of the Valkyries," which opens the third act and which gives musical description of the aerial flight of the Valkyries, and the poignant "Wotan's Farewell and Magic Fire Scene" with which the music drama closes. The circle of fire which slowly envelops the sleeping Brünnhilde is vividly recreated in brilliant tonal painting that brings the latter composition to a close. Equally famous is the Love Music of Siegmund and Sieglinde from Act I.

Recommended recordings: Act I, complete, VM-298 (Vienna State Opera Soloists and Orchestra—Walter); Act II, complete, VM-582 (Berlin State Opera Soloists and Orchestra—Walter); Act III, complete, CM-581 (Traubel; Janssen; Vocal Ensemble of the Metropolitan Opera; Philharmonic-Symphony—Rodzinski).

### III. *Siegfried*

In three acts, book by the composer, introduced at the Festspielhaus in Bayreuth, on August 26, 1876.

Sieglinde dies in giving birth to Siegfried, who grows up in a forest, guarded by the dwarf Mime. Mime covets the gold and hopes that Siegfried will slay the dragon and gain it for him. Young Siegfried forges a sword that will send him triumphantly into this battle. Going into the forest in which the dragon guards his gold, he lies under the trees and listens to the song of the birds. He then sets forth to fight the dragon, whom he slays. Accidentally, he puts to his lips his finger, wet with the dragon's blood, whereby the power to understand the language of the birds is his. A forest bird tells him of the wonders of the ring, which Siegfried now acquires for himself. The bird warns him of Mime's malice and greed, and Siegfried mercilessly kills him. Finally, the bird tells Siegfried that there is a bride waiting for him—Brünnhilde; and, with the bird as a guide, Siegfried sets forth to the ring of fire. Fearlessly he goes through the flames, kisses Brünnhilde, and claims her as his bride. Brünnhilde awakens, and a passionate love song is heard from the lips of the lovers.

Only one orchestral excerpt is heard often: the lyrical and pastoral "Forest Murmurs" from Act II, Wagner's most idyllic bit of writing. The vocal excerpts most familiar in Siegfried include the "Forging Scene" in Act I, and the ecstatic love music that closes the opera.

Recommended recordings: Acts I and II, excerpts, VM-161 (Miscellaneous artists: London Symphony—Heger); Act III, Prelude and Finale, VM-167 (Melchior-Easton; London Symphony—Heger).

#### IV. *Die Götterdämmerung*

In a prologue and three acts, book by the composer, introduced at the Festspielhaus in Bayreuth on August 17, 1876.

In the prologue the three Norns are spinning the golden rope of Fate. It snaps in their hands, and they realize that the end is near. Dawn breaks, and Siegfried sets forth for new exploits. Bidding farewell to Brünnhilde, he gives her the fatal ring as a token of his love. The first act is in the hall of the Gibichungs, where Gunther and his sister Gutrune hold sway. Hagen, a half-brother, laments the fact that neither Gunther or Gutrune is married; he suggests Siegfried for Gutrune's husband, and Brünnhilde for Gunther's wife—hoping thereby to acquire the precious ring. Suddenly Siegfried arrives. Hagen prepares a potion which robs Siegfried of his memory. He falls in love with Gutrune, and offers to fetch Brünnhilde as a bride for Gunther. Meanwhile, a sister Valkyrie visits Brünnhilde to beg her to surrender the ring. But, token of her great love as it is, Brünnhilde refuses to do so. Soon after this, Siegfried arrives, disguised as Gunther, to get Brünnhilde. In the hall of Gibichungs, Brünnhilde is faced with Siegfried who does not recognize her. Believing herself the victim of treachery, Brünnhilde vows vengeance. She plans with Hagen to have Siegfried go hunting the following day, when he can be killed. At the hunt, Hagen gives Siegfried a new potion, this time to restore his memory. Suddenly, Siegfried recalls Brünnhilde, and he sings ecstatically of his love for her. As he sings, he is murdered by Hagen. The vassals lift his body and carry it back to the hall. There Brünnhilde orders the building of a funeral pyre. Savagely, she throws the ring into the fire, and then mounting a steed rushes into the hungry flames. The hall collapses; the Rhine overflows; Valhalla burns.

Some of the greatest of Wagner's orchestral excerpts come from *Die Götterdämmerung* (*The Dusk of the Gods*). "Siegfried's Rhine Journey" accompanies Siegfried's voyage to new adventure and bridges the Prologue and Act I. "Siegfried's Death Music" (which is sometimes played together with the preceding apostrophe of Siegfried to Brünnhilde) is the solemn panegyric to the dead hero, as the vassals carry away his body; by incorporating within itself the principal *Leit-motives* connected with Siegfried it provides a résumé to the hero's life and achievements. "Brünnhilde's Apostrophe" closes the opera.

Recommended recordings: principal excerpts, VM-60 (Miscellaneous artists; Orchestras—Coates; Collingwood; Blech).

"Siegfried's Rhine Journey," VM-853 (NBC Symphony—Toscanini); "Siegfried's Death Music," VM-853 (NBC Symphony—Toscanini); "Brünnhilde's Apostrophe," VM-644 (Flagstad; Orchestra—McArthur).

#### *Tannhäuser*

In three acts, book by the composer, première at the Dresden Opera, on October 19, 1845.

*Tannhäuser* was Wagner's second major opera, succeeding *The Flying Dutchman* by three years. Wagner first came upon the subject of *Tannhäuser*

in a poem by Tieck which he read during his first visit to Paris. But the opera was not composed until he had assumed his post as musical director in Dresden. He wrote the libretto in 1843, and put the final notes on the instrumentation of his full score in April, 1845. Originally, Wagner intended calling the opera *Der Venusberg*, but his publisher—feeling that such a title might inspire vulgar jests—induced him to change it to *Tannhäuser and the Contest of Song on the Wartburg*.

The first performance was assigned to Dresden. The directors of the Opera had a high opinion of Wagner, and great faith in the new work. They spared no pains in giving it a magnificent production. Special sets were imported from Paris. Unfortunately, the set for the Hall of Song arrived too late, and at the première the management had to substitute an old one from Weber's *Oberon*.

*Tannhäuser* was not so successful as the directors of the Dresden Opera had hoped it would be. Part of the explanation lies in the disappointment of the audience in seeing an old and familiar scenic set in the company of new ones. Another part lies in the novelty of the opera. For, in 1845, *Tannhäuser* definitely sounded a new note for opera. As Ernest Newman has explained, it was the first of Wagner's operas to place so much stress on the drama; besides this, the traditional distinction between song and recitative was permanently shattered.

*Tannhäuser* was introduced to Paris in 1861 under Wagner's own supervision, and under the sponsorship of Prince Metternich. It received more than 150 rehearsals and was mounted in lavish style, costing more than \$40,000 for the actual production. For this performance (in the French language) Wagner catered to the Parisian's love of ballets by opening the first act with an extended bacchanale now known as the Venusberg Music. The reception accorded by the audience was scandalous. For political reasons, the fashionable Parisian Jockey Club sent its members to hoot, howl, and whistle during the progress of the music. After three performances, the opera was removed from the repertoire, much to Wagner's humiliation.

The minnesinger Tannhäuser has abandoned the world to indulge in the pleasures of love with Venus. But he grows weary of sensual joys, and yearns to return to earth again. His prayers answered, he finds himself lying in the grass in a valley. A band of pilgrims, en route to Rome, waken him with their chant; they urge him to expiate his sins. The contrite Tannhäuser is then met by a group of his fellow minstrel-knights who beg him to return with them to the Wartburg. They mention the name of Elisabeth, which recalls to Tannhäuser the beauty of earthly love and devotion. Tannhäuser returns to the Wartburg, to be met warmly by Elisabeth. A singing contest is about to be held, the winner of which is to receive the hand of Elisabeth. Each of the knights sings of pure and chaste love, but Tannhäuser sings of sensuality, of the carnal delights of the Venusberg. Shocked by his recital, the knights rush on Tannhäuser with drawn swords. He is saved only because of Elisabeth's pleas. The

Landgrave then tells Tannhäuser that only in Rome can he find expiation for his terrible sins. Tannhäuser is gone many months, as Elisabeth pines for her lost lover. Each time a band of pilgrims arrives from Rome she hopes to find Tannhäuser among them. Her sorrow breaks her heart, and she dies. Meanwhile, Tannhäuser returns from Rome ragged and weary. His pilgrimage had been a failure: the Pope had said that there would be no pardon for him until the staff in his hand sprouted leaves. In despair and anguish, Tannhäuser longs to return to Venus, but is restrained only by his memory of Elisabeth. When a procession arrives, carrying Elisabeth's body, Tannhäuser dies at her side. A moment later, pilgrims from Rome come with the miraculous tidings that the Pope's staff has sprouted leaves.

"In the experience of Tannhäuser," wrote W. J. Henderson, "Wagner has set before us the struggle of the pure and the impure, the lusts and aspirations of man's nature. It is essentially the tragedy of man. We may try as we please to exalt the importance of Elisabeth as a dramatic character, but the truth is that she is merely the embodiment of a force. Tannhäuser is typical of his sex, beset on the one hand by the desire of the flesh, which satiates and maddens, and courted on the other by the undying loveliness of chaste and holy love."

"The music of *Tannhäuser*," continues Henderson, "commands less admiration than the book. Some of it is worthy of the mature Wagner, but much is trivial and some is positively weak and puerile. Wagner had not yet grasped a new conception of the lyric drama; he had thus far only enlarged and extended the old one. He was not yet ready to set aside all the old formulae; but he was striving to give them a new significance. Hence in *Tannhäuser* there are passages of a familiar operatic cut, such as the scene of Tannhäuser and the courtiers in the first act, ending with the finale of that act, the duet between Tannhäuser and Elisabeth in Act II, and Wolfram's address to the evening star in Act III. On the other hand, most of the score shows wide departures from the older operatic manner. There is a sincere attempt to make the musical forms follow the poem. There is an abundance of real dialogue, in which the setting of the text is constructed on the purest dramatic lines. This is especially true of the scene between Tannhäuser and Venus, the debate in the hall of song, and the narrative of Tannhäuser. But such admirable pieces of writing as the address of the Landgrave to the contestants and the pathetic prayer of Elisabeth have also a large dramatic value because of the perfect embodiment of the feeling of the scene."

The Overture and the sensual Venusberg Music (frequently played together at symphony concerts, and without pause) are celebrated. The Overture contains much of the principal material of the opera, including the pilgrims' chant (which opens the work) and Tannhäuser's song in praise of sensual love and the delights of the Venusberg. And the Bacchanale is surely one of the most sensual pages in all opera, a glorification of carnal love.

More than any other opera of Wagner, *Tannhäuser* contains famous vocal

excerpts which most closely approximate the traditional aria: these include Tannhäuser's Hymn to Venus (Act I), Elisabeth's apostrophe to the Wartburg, "*Dich teure Halle,*" Wolfram's Eulogy of Love (Act II), Elisabeth's Prayer, and Wolfram's Ode to the Evening Star (Act III), and the Pilgrims' Chorus, heard in both Acts I and III. The March in Act II, accompanying the entrance of the minnesingers into the Hall of Song, is also familiar.

Recommended recordings: slightly abridged, CM-154 (Bayreuth Festival Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra—Elmendorff).

Overture and Bacchanale, VM-530 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

### *Tristan und Isolde*

In three acts, book by the composer, first performance at the Munich Opera on June 10, 1865.

In 1857-8, Richard Wagner was a guest at the home of Otto Wesendonck, a silk merchant. A love-affair developed between Wagner and Wesendonck's wife, Mathilde—and it was during the period of this love that Wagner composed *Tristan und Isolde*. Many biographers have suggested that Wagner was inspired to write his great drama of love because of his own feelings for Mathilde. But Ernest Newman astutely suggests that it is just as probable that Wagner fell in love with Mathilde because he was working on a great love drama.

In any case, no greater love music is found anywhere than that in *Tristan*, no more passionate expression of the yearning of two lovers for each other.

"The fundamental idea of *Tristan*," wrote Lavignac, "is that passion has imprescriptible rights, superior to all law and to the judgment of man, provided it be absolute, doomed, and willing to accept death as its sole refuge. *Tristan* among all of Wagner's works is the most passionate and disconsolate. Here we have the greatest love to which the world has given birth, and also the most frightful state of being which may be assigned to mortals. The life is accursed. One is compelled to wish for nothingness, for 'night,' the blindness of will. Those who are truly happy are Tristan and Isolde, reunited in death. Unfortunate is King Mark, who remains among the living!

"The music of *Tristan* may be classed with that which is not judged, not criticized; it takes entire possession of the listener, penetrates to the very depth of his soul, possesses him and leaves him exhausted."

Wagner composed *Tristan* during the period in which he was engaged on the *Ring*. Realizing that the *Ring* would not be completed before many years, and that—even then—the tremendous production problem it posed would discourage immediate performance, Wagner decided to write a new work adaptable for presentation in German opera houses. He completed *Tristan* in 1859, but it had to wait six years before it was introduced (under Hans von Bülow's direction) in Munich.

King Mark of Cornwall sends his nephew, Tristan, to Ireland to fetch for him the daughter of the King of Ireland, Isolde. The princess, angered

because Tristan has come to seek her for another rather than for himself, orders her maid, Brangäne, to prepare a death potion for him. Tristan, madly in love with Isolde, is ready to drink the poison. But Brangäne has substituted a love potion for the fatal one, and, after drinking a toast, the two lovers face each other with passionate ardor. The second act takes place in the garden of King Mark's castle, and is dominated by the love scene between Tristan and Isolde. King Mark breaks in upon them, and denounces Tristan for his treachery. Melot, one of Mark's men, stabs Tristan. As Tristan lies wounded in Brittany, tended by Kurwenal, Isolde follows him there, and Tristan dies in her arms. Meanwhile, King Mark arrives with his men to pardon the lovers. But it is too late. Tristan is dead, and Isolde dies with him.

"The personal root of *Tristan*," explain Howes and Hope-Wallace, "was his association with Mathilde Wesendonck. Its musical germ is the opening phrase of the Prelude, three bars long, a sinuous rising strand of melody that floats up over a chromatic progression of harmony that is designed to avoid resolution and to delay the establishment of a definite tonality. Everything follows from the principal theme of the drama, and it is only the interruptions—the sailors in Act I, the hunting horns in Act II, honest Kurwenal in Act III, and King Mark, who inclines to speak in the interval of a seventh—that cleave their way through the twining chromaticism, to some sort of diatonic utterance. *Tristan*, though a legendary subject, has none of the paraphernalia of a saga to carry. . . . *Tristan* is as concentrated as the *Ring* is vast, and its closer comprehensibility has won for it the crown of perfection—that as the ideal realization of Wagnerian music drama."

The Prelude (to Act I) and the Love Death (which closes the opera)—played together, and without interruption, at symphony concerts—are the most famous orchestral excerpts from *Tristan*. The Prelude, as Ernest Newman pointed out, gives us the spiritual essence of the drama in a highly concentrated form. The Love Death (or *Liebestod*) is, of course, the poignant lament which Isolde sings over the dead body of Tristan—her last utterance before her own death.

The Love Music of Act II—surely one of the greatest examples of love music in all literature—was adapted for orchestra by Frederick Stock and Leopold Stokowski.

Recommended recordings: slightly abridged, CM-101 (Bayreuth Festival Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra—Elmendorff).

Symphonic Synthesis, VM-508 (Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski); "Love Music," adapted for orchestra, CM-427 (All-American Youth Orchestra—Stokowski); "Love Death," V-15840 (Flagstad; San Francisco Opera Orchestra—McArthur).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

Wagner himself adapted many of the stirring scenes from his music dramas for symphony orchestra, and in this form these excerpts are as well known, and as frequently heard, as the familiar symphonies and concertos. These indi-

vidual excerpts are commented upon under the respective music dramas to which they belong. However, to facilitate identification, the following table may prove useful:

EXCERPT	from	MUSIC-DRAMA
Bacchanale (Venusberg Music)		<i>Tannhäuser</i>
Brünnhilde's Immolation		<i>Die Götterdämmerung</i>
Dance of the Apprentices		<i>Die Meistersinger</i>
Entrance of the Gods into Valhalla		<i>Das Rheingold</i>
Flower Maidens Scene		<i>Parsifal</i>
Forest Murmurs		<i>Siegfried</i>
Good Friday Spell		<i>Parsifal</i>
Grand March		<i>Tannhäuser</i>
Love Death		<i>Tristan und Isolde</i>
Magic Fire Scene		<i>Die Walküre</i>
Magic Garden Scene		<i>Parsifal</i>
Ride of the Valkyries		<i>Die Walküre</i>
Siegfried's Funeral Music		<i>Die Götterdämmerung</i>
Siegfried's Rhine Journey		<i>Die Götterdämmerung</i>
Transformation Scene		<i>Parsifal</i>
Wotan's Farewell		<i>Die Walküre</i>

### *Siegfried Idyll*

The *Siegfried Idyll*, one of Wagner's few works written directly for orchestra, was a birthday gift by the master to his wife Cosima in 1870. He wrote it in great secrecy and rehearsed it at a nearby inn. It was the expression of his love for Cosima and of his gratitude to her for the birth of their son Siegfried (one year earlier). Then on the morning of Cosima's birthday (Christmas morning, incidentally), she was awakened by this exquisite and tender music—as gentle as a lullaby—performed by a small orchestra, grouped on the stairway leading to her bedroom and conducted by Wagner himself. The setting, of course, was Tribschen, Wagner's home in Lucerne.

At the time Wagner composed this masterpiece—and it is one of his most inspired works—he was deep in work upon his music drama *Siegfried*. It is therefore understandable that the *Idyll* should contain thematic material from the music drama itself: the principal subject, with which the work opens, is easily recognized as the theme of the love music that closes *Siegfried*.

How personally and intimately Wagner regarded this work is proved by the fact that for a long time he refused to permit its publication. He felt it belonged to his family alone, and that it contained his most intimate sentiments. The children often referred to the work as the "Stairway Music."

Recommended recording: V-14009-10 (New York Philharmonic—Toscanini).

## SONGS

*Träume (Dreams)*

In 1857, Wagner composed a song cycle *Fünf Gedichte*, for voice and orchestra, to poems written by his beloved, Mathilde Wesendonck. The five songs include: “*Der Engel*”; “*Stehe still*”; “*Im Treibhaus*”; “*Schmerzen*”; and “*Träume*.” The most famous of this set is “*Träume*” (Dreams), which Wagner intended as “a study to *Tristan und Isolde*.” Sentimental, tender, meditative, it is a fragmentary impression of the great music-drama. It was arranged for orchestra by Theodore Thomas.

“*Im Treibhaus*,” also intended as a study for *Tristan*, contains reminiscences of two motives taken from that opera—“Wounded Tristan,” and “Tristan’s Longing.”

Recommended recording: VM-872 (Traubel; Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski).

# WALTON

WILLIAM WALTON, b. Odham, Lancashire, England, 1902. Studied at Christ Church College and with Hugh Allen in Oxford. He composed his first major work, a Piano Quartet, in 1919, and first achieved fame with *Façade* in 1926. His rise to the forefront of modern English composers was rapid, and his works were frequently represented at the concerts of the International Society of Contemporary Music. In 1939, he visited the United States, and in 1940 he enlisted in the British Army.

WILLIAM WALTON is one of the most original and important creative figures in modern English music. He has brought vitality, independence, and a richness of feeling and thinking to English music. His tendency, as Edwin Evans wrote in explaining Walton’s technique, “is to surround his material with a wealth of contrapuntal arabesque and a profusion of rhythms. But it is such clean writing that clarity suffers but rarely. . . . When he is so disposed, he can allow a subjective emotion to rise to the surface without any fear that it will float there like an oil-stain.”

His music, explains Hubert J. Foss, is not “informed wholly by an Anglo-Saxon culture. The music was conceived from an untraditional angle. This is not to imply that Walton’s music is un-English. . . . Evidence of a strong English culture there is. . . . Yet many colours from other, more southern sun-rays are focussed on to the music, and are still so today.”

“Walton,” continues Mr. Foss, “from being an artist in styles, has become an artist in moods. He constructs emotionally. You will never find a trace of anticlimax in Walton’s works. This artistry in moods is but one example of



the fine aristocratic eclecticism which colours all Walton's music. Walton is not only master of his sounds and of their combination: he chooses, with the delicate air of an expert in precious stones, those of his store of jewels which will show best in this setting or another. His power of selection, coupled with his sense of styles, is evidenced in orchestration as well as in the texture of his music."

## CHORAL MUSIC

### *Belshazzar's Feast*

Osbert Sitwell selected from the Bible the text for Walton's great choral work, *Belshazzar's Feast*. The work was introduced at the Leeds Festival on October 10, 1931, under the direction of Malcolm Sargent, and was subsequently performed in Vienna and New York.

The London *Times* has given the following description of this music: "It opens with a trumpet call, a single reiterated figure note, heralding the words 'Thus Spake Isaiah.' The prophecy of the Babylonian captivity is asserted in hard, chordal harmonies. The psalm 'By the Waters of Babylon' is set realistically. It begins in a mood of self-pity, it culminates in a burning vengefulness. . . . The catalogue of Babylon's material wealth leads to a choral picture of Belshazzar's Feast. They praise the gods of gold and of silver to the accompaniment of a four-square march rhythm."

"If Walton never again writes a note, good, bad, or indifferent," wrote J. H. Elliott reviewing this work, "he has in *Belshazzar's Feast* definitely staked a claim to a position of importance among twentieth-century composers. No words could do justice to this music: its force and power, its unhesitating rightness as musical and dramatic statement and, above all, the blazing artistic conviction which drives the whole conception forward, mark it as one of the most remarkable achievements of any English composer."

Recommended recording: VM-974 (Liverpool Philharmonic; Soloists, etc.—Walton).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Façade*

Perhaps no finer and more subtle use of jazz has been made by a European composer than is found in this "melodrama for voice and chamber orchestra" to poems by Edith Sitwell. Composed in 1926, this composition achieved success and placed its composer in the front rank of English musicians. It is witty and satiric throughout, full of spice. "As a spirited and lively work," wrote Hubert J. Foss, "it is without a modern English rival, so full of pace and vivacity and humor is it. Its chief technical interest lies first in its brilliant rhythmic pattern which, touched by the tricks of jazz-writers, far exceeds mathematically anything they have ever heard of; and secondly, in its ability to state a plain and obvious melody in a significant way without accompaniment. . . . The *Façade* is an amusement of the high-jinks kind, but well

shows that music to be amusing must first be satisfactory and (particularly) skilful as music."

It is throughout a rich vein of satire, as, for example, in the "Yodeling Song," in which the composer impudently injects a phrase from Rossini's *William Tell Overture*.

The movements of this suite are as follows: I. Black Mrs. Behemoth; II. Yodeling Song; III. Long Still Grass; IV. A Man from a Far Countree; V. Polka; VI. Fox-Trot; VII. Scotch Rhapsody; VIII. Tarantella; IX. Valse; X. Popular Song.

Recommended recording: V-12034-5 (London Philharmonic—Walton).

### **Portsmouth Point**

This brilliant overture was composed in 1926 and introduced on June 22, 1926, at the International Festival of Contemporary Music at Zurich. Constant Lambert described it as follows: "Melodically speaking, the work derives to a certain extent from traditional nautical tunes and from the more breezy English 18th century composers. . . . Another melodic influence was the sardanas of Catalonia. The folk dances have nothing in common with the rest of Spanish music, and are distinguished by their clear-cut form and vigorous melodic line; the tunes are often curiously English in atmosphere, and therefore their influence has in no way caused an inconsistency of style. From the harmonic point of view the work raises no problems. The style is broadly diatonic, with a free use of diatonic discords but with nothing approaching atonality or polytonality; we are presented with neither clichés nor innovations."

The work was inspired by a print of Thomas Rowlandson depicting a busy English quay.

Recommended recording: V-4327 (B.B.C. Symphony—Boult).

# WEBER

KARL MARIA VON WEBER, b. Eutin, Oldenburg, 1786. His father, determined to make him another Mozart, began teaching him music early. When he was nine, Weber composed a comic-opera that was performed in Vienna and other places. After studying with Michael Haydn and Abbé Vogler, Weber became a conductor, first in Breslau, then in Württemberg. Other major posts included that of director of the Prague Opera and Kapellmeister of German Opera at Dresden. He distinguished himself as a meticulous and gifted conductor. In 1820, he achieved fame throughout Europe with his opera *Der Freischütz*, introduced in Berlin. He followed this success by composing *Euryanthe* for Vienna, and *Oberon* for London. He came to London to direct *Oberon* despite illness, and the strain of preparing the opera for production undermined his health further. He died in London in 1826, almost a month after the successful première of his last opera.

THE operatic road that leads to Richard Wagner has many milestones, but none more important than Weber. No other single operatic composer influenced Wagner so decisively as Weber (as Wagner himself was not slow to confess). For Weber not only established German opera, as opposed to the Italian type, exploiting folk elements, borrowing from Germanic traditions and superstitions, filling his work with the love of German landscape, forest, and village, saturating it with Germanic atmosphere and ideals. Further, he made more than one suggestion of what the music-drama should be, anticipating the Wagnerian revolution. For example, he used the *Leit-motif* (though not, of course, in Wagner's extensive and comprehensive way): *Der Freischütz* has eleven themes that appear and reappear throughout the opera; *Euryanthe*, eight. Weber, more than any composer before his time, realized the importance of the recitative and assigned to it an all-important role in the framework of his operas. He used the orchestra symphonically, making it the spine and backbone of the opera. Finally, he strove for (and to a certain extent realized) a unity of the arts in the Wagnerian sense. As he himself wrote about *Euryanthe*: "It is a purely dramatic work, which depends for its success solely on the coöperation of the sister arts, and is certain to lose its effect if deprived of their assistance."

## OPERAS

### *Euryanthe*

In three acts, book by Helmine von Chézy, première at the Kärntnerthor-theater in Vienna on October 25, 1823.

The Kärntnerthortheater in Vienna commissioned Weber to write an opera expressly for that theater, designating a text by Wilhelmine von Chézy (who also wrote the libretto for Schubert's *Rosamunde*). It was a clumsy and inept libretto that faced Weber, full of the pseudoromantic claptrap then in fashion: medieval chivalry, courtly love, seduction, tried fidelity—and all recreated on pedestrian lines. The wonder of it is that Weber succeeded in overcoming such a formidable obstacle and in writing a work of genius in spite of the

restrictions of his book. The past which his instrumentation evoked is one that only the great poets were able to recreate. Weber's music gave it that enchantment of distance and mystery, of something seen through a half-mist or in a dream, which makes the dream world of romanticism acceptable. There are here anticipations of themes and moods to be heard later in *Lohengrin*; as if the music were groping to startle the mind into a perception of incommunicable worlds.

"I am glad, I am glad," wrote Beethoven to Weber. "For this is the way German opera must get the upper hand of the Italian singsong."

The confused and rather complicated plot was drawn from an old French romance, *L'Histoire de Gerard de Nevers et de sa belle et vertueuse Euryanthe, son amie*. Euryanthe and Count Adolar are in love with each other. In a moment of indiscretion, Euryanthe confides to Eglantine the secret surrounding the suicide of Adolar's sister. Meanwhile Adolar's friend, Lysiart, boasts that he can win Euryanthe's favor if he tries. He does not succeed, but on learning that Euryanthe has betrayed the secret of the suicide, he confronts Adolar with this fact as proof that Euryanthe cannot be trusted. In a fit of rage, Adolar takes Euryanthe to the forest to slay her, but at the last moment relents and leaves her there to her fate. The King finds her and, hearing from her of Eglantine's treachery, takes Euryanthe back to the palace. In the end, Adolar repents of his severity toward Euryanthe, kills Eglantine, has Lysiart executed, and is reunited happily with his loved one.

Chivalry, wrote Niecks, is the predominant note of the *Euryanthe* Overture. William Saunders goes further and finds it the note of the whole opera. "With all his love for glamour and trappings of the stage, Weber never lost sight of the true nature of chivalry. It is no high-falutin conception such as the medieval writers of the decadence had invented and evolved that he employed, but a thing of simple grace, courtesy, and dignity. And with the perfect intuitive sense of the fitness of things that never failed to keep his work on correct and absolutely artistic lines he gave us even in *Euryanthe* the real thing. But the outstanding success of the opera lies in the fact that it constitutes the first experiment in a new style of German opera which was destined to revolutionize the whole idea of music-drama conceived in a completely new line of development and achievement. It is in his treatment of his melodies in relation to the harmonies and general accompaniments that Weber most clearly demonstrates his creative genius. . . . From the new character of the work recitative is employed to a great extent, and carried to a higher point of effectiveness than it had probably ever reached before. The opera is less melodic than *Der Freischütz* but the dramatic qualities of the music are more sustained, and there can be no doubt whatever that Wagner took *Euryanthe* as a model for the creation of *Lohengrin*."

The only part of the opera which has retained its popularity to the present time is the wonderful overture, one of the great pages in Romantic music. From the spirited opening, through the sensitive section for strings (echoing

the *Lohengrin Prelude*), through the fugal section, and on to the sweeping coda, the work is born of true inspiration.

Recommended recording: Overture, V-12037 (B.B.C. Symphony—Boult).

### *Der Freischütz*

In three acts, book by Johann Friedrich Kind, introduced at the Berlin Schauspielhaus on June 18, 1821.

For a period, Weber had been fired by the mission of composing a German opera. One day, he picked up a copy of Apel and Laun's ghost stories, one of which struck him as a suitable subject for a national folk opera. He asked Kind to fashion the story into an operatic libretto, then set to work on the music. The result was *Der Freischütz*, Weber's first masterpiece and an epochal work in the history of the music drama.

The book was a combination of solid merit and the spurious—the latter consisting chiefly of the supernatural, diabolic elements. But the text had solid Germanic qualities which enabled Weber to create a new species of folk opera, nurtured by the Germanic past and traditions.

The opera was greeted with unprecedented enthusiasm at its first performance in Berlin. Weber himself recorded the extent of the success in his diary: "This evening *Der Freischütz* was given . . . in the Schauspielhaus with incredible enthusiasm. Overture and Bridesmaids' Song encored; out of seventeen pieces, fourteen loudly applauded. All went excellently well. I was called for, and went forward. . . . Plenty of garlands of flowers." The passionate young Romantics saw in Weber a standard-bearer of the new imagination. They listened to the sounds of the hunting horn and they warmed to the evocation of the past. They found in this music an affirmation of the German soul.

But the critics were not quite so ready to accept the new work. They called it "the most unmusical row that ever roared upon a stage"; they said it was compounded of "deviltry and fireworks"; they insisted that the characterization "bordered on caricature." Fortunately, however, this unfavorable critical reception could not dampen the enthusiasm of the public. *Der Freischütz* was performed fifty times in less than eighteen months, drawing opulent receipts into the box-office.

"It is difficult to find," wrote Berlioz, "in searching the new or old school, a score as irreproachable as *Der Freischütz*, as constantly interesting from beginning to end; whose melody has more freshness in the various shapes it assumes, whose rhythms are more striking, whose harmonic invention is more varied, more forcible, whose use of massed voices and instruments is more energetic without effort, more suave without affectation. From the beginning of the overture to the last chord of the final chorus, it is impossible for me to find a bar the omission or the change of which I would consider desirable. Intelligence, imagination, genius shine everywhere with a radiance, the force of which might dazzle any but eagle eyes, if a sensitiveness, inexhaustible as

well as restrained, did not soften its glare, covering the listener with the gentle folds of its veil."

Kaspar is about to lose his soul to the demon of the forests and can save himself only by providing a substitute. Max is in love with Agathe, the daughter of the huntsman Kuno, and he hopes to win the consent of Kuno to the marriage through winning a shooting match which will bring him the position from which Kuno is about to retire. Zamiel works his evil, and Max proves to be a poor shot. In his determination to win, Max becomes involved with Zamiel, who promises to provide him with magic bullets. Zamiel gives him seven magic bullets, six which will follow Max's wishes, but the seventh of which is under Zamiel's spell. With the six bullets, Max wins the contest. But when the Prince orders Max to shoot once more, Zamiel directs the seventh bullet toward Agathe. A magic wreath saves her, and the bullet instead pierces Kaspar. Zamiel claims Kaspar as his victim, and Max is wedded to Agathe.

As in the case of *Euryanthe*, the Overture is the most famous part of the opera. It is one of the earliest examples in which the chief material of the opera is incorporated in an orchestral prelude to set the atmosphere and suggest the action to come. Forceful, dramatic, powerful, it has maintained its popularity in the concert hall. Almost as well known is Agathe's tender air in the second act, "*Leise, leise, fromme Weise*."

Recommended recording: Overture, C-68986D (London Philharmonic—Beecham); "*Leise, leise, fromme Weise*," V-6568 (Jeritza).

### ***Oberon***

In three acts, book by James Robinson Planché, introduced at Covent Garden, London, April 12, 1826.

In 1824, Weber was commissioned to write an opera for Covent Garden. He selected the subject of *Oberon*, and—harboring a presentiment that he was on the verge of death—he applied herculean effort to bring the opera to completion. Despite ill-health, he insisted on making the trip to England to supervise the production. He personally conducted the first performance of the opera, which was thunderously successful. But the strain was too much for him, and he died about three weeks later.

In *Oberon* (in which three characters from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* appear—Oberon, Titania, and Puck), Weber evokes that magic fairy-world which Mendelssohn was soon to make his domain. "His music," wrote H. E. Krehbiel of *Oberon*, "establishes a relationship between the denizens of a supernatural world and the poetically transfigured men and women of romantic chivalry and makes their union appealing to our sympathy, while the pictures make it plausible to our imagination. Weber's music charms by its simple melodiousness and fascinates by its play of instrumental color. Yet there are discernible in it germs of some of the principles which Wagner employed in his dramas."

Oberon and Titania have had a quarrel, and Oberon insists that before a reconciliation can take place there must be found two lovers whose passion for each other can survive temptations and tests. The pair selected are Sir Huon of Bordeaux and Rezia. Oberon brings Rezia to Sir Huon in a vision, and Sir Huon succumbs to her beauty at once. Provided with a magic horn which enables him to summon Titania, and a cup which detects villainy, Sir Huon goes in search of his loved one. He finds Rezia, and a long series of adventures take place to test their love. But it survives these ordeals. Clutched from death by the magic horn, Huon and Rezia are finally united, and Titania and Oberon are reconciled.

Once again, the Overture is the most famous portion of the opera, but there are other pages of inspiration, notably the soprano aria in Act II, "Ocean, thou mighty monster!" and Huon's aria, in the same act.

Recommended recordings: Overture, C-69410D (London Philharmonic—Beecham); "Ocean, thou mighty monster," V-15244 (Flagstad; Philadelphia Orchestra—Ormandy).

## PIANO MUSIC

Weber wrote well for the piano (he was an excellent concert pianist), though it cannot be said that his piano music is filled with the nobility and originality which mark his best opera pages. A *Konzertstück* in F minor (Op. 79) for piano and orchestra, which he composed one day after the première of *Der Freischütz*, is effective concert music, a bit stereotyped perhaps in the effects it achieves, but well constructed, and with graceful writing for the keyboard (Recommended recording: CM-X59; Casadesus; Symphony Orchestra—Bigot). But Weber's most celebrated piano work is the popular *Invitation to the Dance*, Op. 65, which—it must be remembered—he composed for the piano, though it has since become most famous in its various orchestral transcriptions.

### *Invitation to the Dance*

Besides being music of grace and enchantment and charm—an apotheosis of the waltz, so to speak—this work has historic significance, being the first important work in which several different waltz melodies are combined into one integrated form, preceded by a brief introduction, and concluded with a coda. Thus Weber can be said to have established a form for waltz-writing which was to be used with such extraordinary effectiveness by the Viennese masters Lanner, and the two Johann Strausses, father and son.

When Weber composed this work (in 1819) he called it a "Rondo brilliant" for piano. It was immediately successful, its infectious use of waltz melodies giving it a popular appeal which it still retains.

In 1841, for a performance of *Der Freischütz* in Paris, Berlioz orchestrated

the waltz as a ballet for the opera, and in this orchestration it has become known in the symphony hall. Another admirable orchestral transcription of it was made by Felix Weingartner.

Recommended recording: piano version, C-68920D (Friedman); arr. by Berlioz, V-15192 (B.B.C. Symphony—Toscanini); arr. by Weingartner, C-LX890 (London Philharmonic—Weingartner).

## WEINBERGER

JAROMIR WEINBERGER, b. Prague, 1896. Studied at the Prague Conservatory, and subsequently with Reger in Berlin. In 1922 he came to the United States as professor of composition at Ithaca Conservatory. When he returned to Europe in 1926 he was appointed opera director of the National Theater of Bratislava (Pressburg) and director of the Eger School of Music. He became internationally famous in 1927 with his opera *Schwanda*. When Nazi Germany invaded the Sudeten territory of Czechoslovakia, Weinberger settled in Paris. In 1939, he came to the United States, making his home in California.

As Weinberger himself has explained, he has grown in his music from "a nationalist to an internationalist." His early works are deeply rooted in Czech soil and derived from folk idioms. Subsequently, however, he abandoned folk influences and began composing works which are humanitarian in their approach, written for all nations and in an idiom that is of the world rather than of one corner. "I now feel that to compose Czech music is to cultivate a patch of ground too limited and restricted. That was very good when my viewpoint on cosmic matters was limited. Today, my music needs more breathing space, so to speak."

Weinberger's latest works have been profoundly influenced by his transplantation into America: works like *Prelude and Fugue on Dixie*, the *Abraham Lincoln Symphony*, the *Song of the High Seas*, and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* betray the imprint that America has made on his artistic consciousness. "He is truly penetrated and imbued with the spirit of his new home," wrote Paul Nettl. "In his most recent works—taking as their point of departure the visual sensations, descriptions of men and places, the philosophic and religious, the intellectual manifestations of this world—one will scarcely recognize the composer of *Schwanda*. This is a case where a former minstrel, a comparatively simple-minded musician, has been oriented by a new experience and by a life in a new country towards a philosophic and religious approach—a phenomenon not often found in modern music."



## OPERA

*Schwanda der Dudelsackpfeifer*

In two acts, book by Milos Kares, introduced at the Prague Opera on April 27, 1927.

*Schwanda, the Bagpipe Player* has been triumphantly performed in all of the major opera houses in the world. Its appeal is not difficult to understand. It is rich with folk flavors, and appeals both to the ear and to the eye. Otto Erhardt further analyzes the reasons for its phenomenal success: "First of all this Schwanda is a thoroughly pleasant fellow. The public really prefers happiness. Secondly, it is a quite unproblematic work, which avoids all experiments and takes no shame in working with the established means which the opera has recognized since the time of *The Magic Flute*. In the third place the author of the text and the composer have given to the theater what belongs to the theater. In the fourth place, there is the general admixture of the realistic and the fantastic which seldom fails to have its effect on the wide public. Even the grotesque and the burlesque element have their place, without descending to caricature. Thus the taste of the time is catered to and yet the work is not burdened with features of only temporary value."

Schwanda has a magic bagpipe which can work wonders. Babinsky, a robber, hides in Schwanda's house, and when his pursuers disappear, he induces Schwanda to run away with him, telling him that Schwanda's bagpipe can do wonders. They go to the Court of the Queen Ice-Heart where Schwanda's bagpipe-playing brings happiness. When Schwanda's wife appears, the Queen commands that Schwanda be beheaded. But Schwanda's music saves him and carries both him and Babinsky outside the city walls. But Schwanda has lied: he has told his wife that he has not kissed the Queen. For this, he must be consigned to Hell. But Babinsky comes to his rescue and, through a card game, wins for both of them a return to the upper world.

The Polka and Fugue, for orchestra, have become celebrated at symphony concerts.

Recommended recordings: "Polka" and "Fugue," V-7958 (Minneapolis Symphony—Ormandy).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

*Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree*

"In the summer of 1938," explains the composer, "while visiting a theater at Juan-les-Pins on the French Riviera, I saw a news-reel featuring the King of England at a summer camp. He was surrounded by many young people who were joined by him in the singing of a so-called 'gesture song.'" The song was *Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree*, and it inspired Weinberger to write a set of orchestral variations. The first variation is entitled "Her

Majesty's Virginal" and is built in the form of a canon; the second, "Madrigalists," paying tribute to the great madrigal composers of England's past; the third, "The Dark Lady," the heroine of the Shakespeare sonnets; the fourth, "The Highlander," inspired by the music of bagpipes; the fifth, "Pastorale," a portrait of English countryside; the sixth, "Mr. Weller, Senior, Discusses Widows with his Son, Samuel Weller, Esq.," a musical interpretation of the 23rd chapter of Dickens's *Pickwick Papers*; the seventh, "Sarabande for Princess Elizabeth, Electress Palatine and Queen of Bohemia," written in the Dorian mode. The work ends with a fugue.

Recommended recording: CM-X161 (Cleveland Orchestra—Rodzinski).

## WIENIAWSKI

HENRI WIENIAWSKI, b. Lublin, Poland, 1835. Studied at the Paris Conservatory with Massart, winning first prize in violin playing. He undertook a sensational tour as a child prodigy, following which he returned to Paris for additional study. A series of concert tours established him as one of the great violinists of his time. In 1860 he went to Russia where he became solo violinist to the Czar. In 1872, he left Russia and, with Anton Rubinstein, concertized throughout the United States. In 1874, he became professor of the violin at the Brussels Conservatory, holding this post for three years. He died in Moscow in 1880.

WIENIAWSKI was never profound in his music; never did he pierce to the very heart of an emotion nor search the heavens for sublimity. But he had a good sense for tonal beauty, and could express himself effectively. His gift was a minor one, but it yielded some pleasing morsels which have enriched the violin repertoire.

### CONCERTO

#### *Concerto No. 2 in D minor*

Wieniawski composed two concertos for violin and orchestra, of which the second, Op. 22, is the more famous. Without enjoying front rank among the great violin concertos of all time, it nevertheless has in it enough pleasing music, and enough graceful writing for the violin, to sustain its popularity in the concert hall. Undoubtedly the best movement of the concerto is the second, the Romance. Here is a lyricism that is spontaneous; a tender beauty hovers over it delicately. Poetic and full of nostalgia, it is one of Wieniawski's most pleasing melodic pages. The first movement of the concerto (*Allegro moderato*) is rhapsodic in character; while the last movement contains gypsy music brilliant in its virtuoso effects.

Recommended recording: VM-275 (Heifetz; London Philharmonic—Barbirolli).

## VIOLIN MUSIC

Wieniawski's greatest fame as a composer rests with his pyrotechnical pieces for the violin which exhaust the technical possibilities of the instrument. Wieniawski writes brilliantly, and while often one feels that the technical intricacy exists for its own sake rather than for a musical purpose, his violin pieces always make good listening. His best were inspired by the national folk melodies and dances of his native land. These include the dazzling *Kujawiak*, Op. 3 (a mazurka), the *Polonaise brillante* No. 2 (A major, Op. 21), and the *Scherzo Tarantelle*, Op. 16. Another of his effective works was inspired by his long stay in Russia and is based upon such authentic Russian folk songs as *The Red Sarafan—Souvenir de Moscou*, Op. 6. Mention should also be made of a work which has no national traits but which is the most deeply personal and effective piece he wrote: the *Légende*, Op. 17. For once, Wieniawski forgets to indulge in showy technical writing, and produces a beautiful and sustained melody, rich in its feeling and poetry.

Recommended recordings: *Légende*, V-15423 (Menuhin); *Polonaise brillante*, No. 2, V-15813 (Heifetz); *Scherzo Tarantelle*, V-14323 (Heifetz); *Souvenir de Moscou* V-14352 (Menuhin).

## WOLF

HUGO WOLF, genius of song, b. Windischgrätz, Styria, 1860. He was a poor student in every subject other than music, and his parents had to yield to his desire to become a musician. In 1875 he entered the Vienna Conservatory where, strange to say, he was once again the inept pupil, being dismissed after two years. He continued music study by himself, dissecting musical scores of the masters, and memorizing texts on harmony and counterpoint. This was a period of great poverty. In 1884 he became a music critic on the *Salonblatt*, and distinguished himself for his fearless opinions and his brave sponsorship of his contemporaries (except for Brahms, for whom he had little use). At the same time he began composing his *Lieder*, two volumes of which were published in 1887. In 1888 he was uniquely productive, writing most of his famous cycles. In 1897 he went insane and was confined to a private hospital. Subsequently, paralysis set in. He died in Vienna in 1903.

HUGO WOLF recreated the German *Lied*. Influenced as he was by Wagner, he brought new dramatic vistas to the song. His soul-ties were with the great Romantics. His love was the love of the Romantics—for the warmth of Spain and Italy. In his sickliness and sensibility he was a Romantic. But the idiom in which he spoke looked forward, not back. It was an influence given shape by Wagner's example.

With Schubert and Schumann, the *Lied* sought for an ever closer intimacy

between words and music, and Wolf carried this tradition still further. More and more he strove to fuse the poem and the melody so that the song might become something *gesprochenes*—tending almost to the spoken word. The melody, blended inextricably with declamation, became ever more closely wedded to the text—so much so that it often seemed as if music and text were by one and the same man. The melody required new modulations, new harmonic accompaniments, to give it complete expression. Already there were intervals, modulations, harmonic progressions that were living anticipations of later schools of music.

In listening to a song like *Nachtzauber*, one perceives how, by means of the music, the entire poem has become alive and individualized. The voice is set off against the background of a wonderfully distant accompaniment—suggestive (as not even the Romantics ever were) of night, and of the far-off rushing of waters. Only a very acute sensibility, a nervous mechanism responsive in every cell, could have extracted from each poem its *essence* in the way that Wolf did. Only a poet who had drunk in the suggestions of Wagnerian tradition, had fully understood the Wagnerian dream of marrying word to tone, could have brought to these poems the newer melodic life. In a way, Hugo Wolf is himself the Wagner of the newer German *Lied*.

## CHAMBER MUSIC

### *Italian Serenade*

Outside of the realm of song, Hugo Wolf produced at least one work which has gained favor: the *Italian Serenade*, originally written for small orchestra, but later arranged by him for string quartet. He first sketched it as a three-movement work in 1887. For several years it lay idle in an unfinished state. In 1893 he returned to it, revamped the first movement radically, and tried to write two concluding movements. In this last, however, he never succeeded, and the work has remained a one-movement piece.

Written though it was during periods of great depression and suffering, the work is nevertheless one of the most light-hearted, carefree, and graceful of Hugo Wolf's writings. The main theme is based on an old Italian melody which used to be played in Italy on the *piffero* (an obsolete form of oboe).

Recommended recording: V-4271 (Budapest Quartet).

## SONGS

The year of 1888 was a period of wonderful fertility for Hugo Wolf. It was then that he wrote most of the songs that made him immortal: the *Mörike Liederbuch*, the *Goethe Liederbuch*, the *Spanisches Liederbuch*, the *Kellerlieder*, and *Alte Weisen*.

No one has written more comprehensively or more penetratingly of Hugo Wolf's songs than Ernest Newman. Discussing Hugo Wolf's style, Mr. New-

man wrote: "He allowed the poet to prescribe for him the whole shape and color of a song, down even to the smallest details. It was not that he was so little of a musician that he could not, like the others, bend any poem to his arbitrary will, but that he was so much a musician that he could accept any conditions the poet liked to impose upon him and yet work as easily under them as another man could do without such seeming limitations. . . . The justness of Wolf's accentuation, the way in which the melodic accent coincides with the verbal, is wonderful."

One of the noteworthy features of Hugo Wolf's songs is the importance they assign to the piano accompaniment. "It has been objected against the songs," wrote Mr. Newman, "as it formerly was against Wagner's operas, that they are 'unvocal,' that the 'centre of interest is often in the piano rather than the voice,' that 'the voice is treated like an instrument,' and so on. . . . Wolf really amalgamated the two. . . . He had one of the most contrapuntal brains of modern time. Counterpoint with him was a living thing; he could scarcely think of a melody without other melodies consanguineous with it spontaneously suggesting themselves to him."

"To think of his songs one by one is to see defiling before the eye a veritable pageant of humanity in epitome," continues Newman, "a long procession of forms of the utmost variety, all drawn to the very life—lovers and maidens in every phase of passion and despair, poets, rogues, humorists, philosophers, hunters, sailors, kings, lovable good-for-nothings, Hedonists, Stoics, religious believers of every shade of confident ecstatic faith or torturing doubt. They are set in every conceivable form of environment; the whole panorama of nature is unrolled before us . . . together with everything in nature that has voice or movement . . . For volume and plasticity and definiteness of characterization there is nothing like it in music outside Wagner. No two characters are the same; each bears about him all the distinguishing signs of his native land, breathes his own atmosphere, wears his own dress, thinks with his own brain. A religious song in the *Spanische Liederbuch* is as different from one in the *Mörike* volume as Spain is from Swabia. . . . The passion of the women in the Spanish or Italian songs is another thing than the passion of those in the *Mörike* or Goethe songs. When Wolf, again, plays humorously with life it is in a style and idiom that vary with every character he represents—Goethe's *Rattenfänger*; Eichendorff's *Schreckenberger*, or his *Glücksritter*, or his *Scholar*; the scornful women of the Southern songs, whose derision sometimes lies so dangerously close to anger and hatred; the quasi-Oriental Hedonists of Goethe's *Schenkenbuch*, singing of the joys of the tavern;—all are as different in speech and in bearing as their prototypes in real life would be. *Truer* music, in the full sense of the word, there has never been. Wolf practically never repeats himself in the songs; every character is drawn from the living model."

Some of the most famous of Hugo Wolf's songs are: *Anakreons Grab*; *Auch kleine Dinge* (*Italienisches Liederbuch*); *Auf ein altes Bild*; *I. u. denkst mit*

*einem Fädchen; Frühling übers Jahr; Der Gärtner; Heimweh; In dem Schatten meiner Locken (Spanisches Liederbuch); Prometheus; Das Ständchen; Storchenbotschaft; Verborgenheit.*

Recommended recordings: virtually all the great songs of Hugo Wolf have been recorded in six volumes by the Hugo Wolf Society, interpreted by Elena Gerhardt, Alexander Kipnis, Friedrich Schorr, Herbert Janssen, Gerhard Hüsch, Elisabeth Rethberg, Ria Ginster, and others.

## WOLF-FERRARI

ERMANNO WOLF-FERRARI, b. Venice, 1876. His father was German; his mother, Italian. He was a student of Rheinberger in Munich, following which he composed an oratorio which was successfully performed in Venice in 1899. He began writing operas which, though performed, were not particularly well received. Not until 1909 did he attract attention, when his opera *The Secret of Suzanne* was outstandingly successful. In 1902, he became director of the Liceo Benedetto Marcello, holding the post for five years. He has since that time lived in Munich devoting himself to the composition of other operas.

THE possessor of a very robust style and a rich melodic vein, Wolf-Ferrari has written two operas which are of permanent interest: *The Secret of Suzanne* and *The Jewels of the Madonna*. In neither of these works is he a great composer, but he is an astute craftsman who knows how to write dramatically and with sentiment. As William Saunders pointed out; "His airs really do not display a great power of melodic invention, but interspersed as they frequently are in a welter of discordant cacophony, they actually sound to better advantage than they would otherwise have done. A great fault in these melodies of his, also, is a too frequent use of cadence. His clever borrowings and employment of popular airs and folk themes, on the other hand, supply a welcome variety. . . . His writing and scoring of dance themes also . . . falls little, if at all, short of genius . . . His chorus writing, again, is seldom at fault, and generally reminds one of the best examples of Verdi. . . . And lastly, he is a past master of orchestration."

### OPERA

#### *The Secret of Suzanne*

In one act, book by Enrico Golischiani, introduced at the Munich Hofoper on December 4, 1909.

*The Secret of Suzanne* is a gem of opera buffa, a worthy descendant of *La Serva Padrona*; undoubtedly, Wolf-Ferrari had the older comic opera in mind as a model, for he, too, designated his opus as an "intermezzo." Built

around an absurd libretto, the music nevertheless has so much charm, such ebullient zest, such freshness, such a swift pace that its appeal is as strong today as it was when first heard.

The Count is suspicious of his wife when, coming home one day, he smells the faint odor of tobacco. When his wife's answers to his questions are evasive, he becomes convinced that she has a lover. The secret is, of course, that Suzanne has taken to smoking (in private). And when the Count learns the truth he is so relieved that he consents to smoke with her.

The brisk and impudent-toned overture is well-known. Three soprano arias are also distinctive: "*Il dolce idillio*," "*Gioia, la nube leggiera*," and "*Via! così non mi lasciate*."

Recommended recordings: Overture, V-4412 (Boston Pops Orchestra—Fiedler); "*Gioia, la nube leggiera*," V-14616 (Bori).

# *A*PPENDICES





# APPENDIX I

## A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF MUSICAL HISTORY

The following key is provided for those who would like to use the book in tracing the growth and development of musical forms.

### I. THE AGE OF COUNTERPOINT

- The Netherland School (see Josquin des Prés and Orlando de Lasso) convert contrapuntal writing into a highly sensitized art in the 16th century.  
The Golden Age of Polyphony (or counterpoint) is reached with Palestrina.  
Heinrich Schütz brings over the great traditions of counterpoint to Germany, thus constituting the transition to the age of Bach and Handel.  
The Oratorio is born in Rome with the Congregation of the Oratorio (for origin and early history, see Handel). It reaches its highest development with Handel.  
The Age of Counterpoint achieves its culmination with Johann Sebastian Bach.  
The Use of Counterpoint in Secular Music: The Madrigal (see Morley, Monteverdi).

### II. EARLY HOMOPHONIC MUSIC

- A style of instrumental writing, different from a vocal style, is achieved by the early organ masters (see Buxtehude). The early forms are evolved (for evolution of such organ forms as Passacaglia, Chorale Prelude, Toccata, etc., see Bach: Organ Music).  
The Opera is created by the "camerata" in Florence (for origins see Monteverdi). It achieves artistic status for the first time with Monteverdi.

### III. THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

- Kuhnau writes the first sonata for the piano. A keyboard style is evolved for the piano by such composers as Couperin, Rameau, and Domenico Scarlatti.  
The Violin Sonata is born with Corelli.  
The Concerto Grosso is born with Corelli.  
The Development of Opera in England (see Purcell). The Birth and Development of French Opera (see Lully, Rameau).  
The Comic Opera is born with Pergolesi, and is further developed by Cimarosa (for development of the comic opera in France, Germany and Italy after Pergolesi, see Pergolesi).

### IV. THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

- The Struggle between early music-drama and the Italian traditions (see Gluck).  
The Rise of German Opera (see Mozart)  
The Growth of the Concerto Grosso (see Vivaldi, Handel, and Bach). (Note:

For more recent adaptations of the concerto-grosso form, see Brahms's Concerto for Violin and 'Cello; Elgar's *Introduction and Allegro*; Bloch's Concerto Grosso.)

The Instrumental Concerto is evolved out of the Concerto Grosso (see Corelli; Vivaldi; Bach). Bach writes the first Piano Concerto; the first two-piano concerto. The Concerto form is crystallized by Mozart.

The Symphony is born in Mannheim (for origin and early development, see Stamitz). It first realizes its artistic potentialities with Haydn, and goes through further growth and development with Mozart.

The String Quartet is realized with Haydn (for early history, see Haydn).

The expansion of the Sonata form with Haydn and Mozart.

## V. THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Symphony, Sonata, Concerto, and String Quartet achieve full enrichment with Beethoven, who may be regarded as the transition from the classicism of Haydn and Mozart to the romanticism of Schubert, Mendelssohn, etc.

Italian Developments in Opera (see Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Boïto, Verdi).

French Developments: Dramatic French Opera is born with Auber. It is further developed by Meyerbeer, Halévy, Gounod, Bizet, Massenet.

Germanic Developments: The German Opera can be said to have been born with Mozart's *The Magic Flute* (18th century) and to have developed with Beethoven's *Fidelio*. Germanic Opera is fully realized by Weber and brought to altogether new directions and fulfillment with Wagner.

Comic Opera Develops in France (see Auber, Boïeldieu, Hérold, Offenbach).

Comic Opera in Germany (see Nicolai, Johann Strauss).

Comic Opera in England (see Sullivan).

Comic Opera in America (see Victor Herbert).

The Ballet as an independent artistic form is first realized by Delibes. (For further development see Tchaikovsky; for 20th-century examples see Stravinsky, Ravel, Carpenter.)

## VI. ROMANTICISM

The Birth of the *Lied*. Songs were composed by Mozart and Beethoven (see Beethoven: Songs); but the *Lied* was first completely realized by Schubert. Further growth of the *Lied* (see Loewe, Franz, Cornelius, Brahms, Hugo Wolf). The Song in America (see Foster).

Romanticism in Symphony, Sonata, Quartet, Concerto, etc., as realized by Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Chopin and Brahms.

New Horizons for the Symphony (see Brahms, Mahler, Bruckner).

Piano Music is developed by Chopin, Schumann, Liszt, Brahms.

Violin Music is developed by Paganini, Vieuxtemps, Wieniawski.

The Growth of Program Music (for early Program Music, see Kuhnau, also Handel's *Israel in Egypt*): Berlioz, Liszt, Richard Strauss. The Tone-Poem is created by Franz Liszt, and developed by Richard Strauss.

French Romanticism (see Berlioz; César Franck; Fauré; Chausson; d'Indy).

The Growth of Nationalism: *Russia* (see Glinka). The "Russian Five" (see Balakirev; also Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin, Mussorgsky; also Tchaikovsky).

*Scandinavia* (see Grieg)

*Bohemia* (see Dvořák, Smetana)

*Spain* (see Albéniz)

*Poland* (see Moniuszko)

*America* (see Gilbert, Macdowell)

## VII. THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Development of the Italian Opera (Montemezzi, Wolf-Ferrari, Puccini).

Opera in America (Deems Taylor, Gruenberg, Hanson). Opera Acquires New Vistas (see Charpentier's *Louise*; Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*; Strauss's *Elektra* and *Salome*; Berg's *Wozzeck*; Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*).

The Song (see Debussy, Duparc, Richard Strauss).

Development of Piano Music (see Debussy, Scriabin, Medtner, Ravel).

Impressionism (see Debussy, Delius, Loeffler).

Expressionism (see Schönberg, Berg, Křenek).

Neo-Classicism (see Hindemith, Stravinsky).

Nationalism: *Russia* (Before the Revolution, see Stravinsky, Rachmaninoff;

Soviet Music, see Prokofieff, Shostakovich, Miaskovsky).

*England* (see Vaughan Williams)

*Spain* (see Granados, Falla, Turina)

*Hebrew Music* (see Bloch)

*Finland* (see Sibelius)

*Mexico* (see Chávez)

*South America* (see Villa-Lobos)

*Bohemia and Czechoslovakia* (see Janaček, Weinberger)

*Poland* (see Szymanowski, Tansman)

*Hungary* (see Bartók, Dohnányi, Kodály)

*Rumania* (see Enesco)

The French School: Satie helps to create the French-Six (see Satie, also Milhaud, Honegger). Schmitt, Roussel, Ravel.

The English School: Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Bax, Walton, Britten.

The Italian School: Pizzetti, Respighi, Malipiero, Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Rieti.

The American School: Ives, Hanson, Roy Harris, Copland, Schuman, Barber, Piston.

Jazz in Serious Music: Milhaud (see *La Création du Monde*), Gershwin, Carpenter, Robert Russell Bennett, Gould, Grofé, Gruenberg.

# APPENDIX II

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For those who would like to do additional reading on music and musicians, the following select bibliography is appended.

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# APPENDIX IV

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# ADDENDA

The following pages contain material on the new composers: Bernstein, Creston, Kabalevsky, Khatchaturian; and analyses of new works by composers already discussed in this book, including Bartók, Britten, Copland, Gruenberg, Hanson, Harris, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Stravinsky. The reader is referred to Page 674 for a complete index to the addenda.

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# BARTÓK

BÉLA BARTÓK died in New York City on September 26, 1945.

## CONCERTOS

### *Third Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*

THIS is Bartók's last work. During the closing days of his life—and Bartók knew that they were numbered—he worked feverishly to bring it to completion. His son, on leave from the Navy, sat by his father's bedside and ruled out on the score paper the closing measures. Bartók completed all but the last seventeen measures of his concerto before he died; but these he had sketched in a musical shorthand, which were deciphered by his friend and disciple, Tibor Serly. "It was touching to note," noted Serly, "that he had prematurely scrawled in pencil the Hungarian word '*vege*'—the end—on the last bar of his sketch copy, as though he were desperately aiming to reach it. On no other score had he written the word."

Bartók had originally planned this concerto for two pianos. But as his life drew near its close, he wanted his last work to be a personal message—his spiritual will and testament—to his wife, the gifted pianist, Ditta Pasztory Bartók. For this purpose one piano seemed more appropriate than two. The concerto is dedicated to his wife.

The world première of the concerto took place in Philadelphia on February 8, 1946, with Gyorgy Sandor as soloist, and Eugene Ormandy conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra.

The work is in the traditional three movements. "Though the composer was seriously ill," wrote one reviewer, "the vigor of his intellect was apparently undiminished. His concerto moves from beginning to end with undeviating assurance. And there is—most affecting of all—a serenity in the slow movement that could only be the work of a man who had risen above the pains of the flesh."

### *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*

This work was composed before Bartók's expatriation. It was completed in Budapest in 1938, and its world première took place in Amsterdam on April 23, 1939 with Zoltan Szekely (to whom the work is dedicated) as soloist, and

Willem Mengelberg conducting the Concertgebouw Orchestra. It was first heard in the United States on January 21, 1943, in Cleveland with Tossy Spivakovsky as soloist, and Artur Rodzinski conducting the Cleveland Orchestra. Since that time it has been heard frequently throughout this country, and during the season of 1945-1946 it was featured repeatedly by Yehudi Menuhin.

The work is in three movements. The first, in sonata form, is passionate and intense with more than a passing suggestion of the severity one finds in so many Bartók compositions. The first theme, announced by the solo instrument, sets the mood for the entire section; the second theme is written in the twelve-tone system. A theme of moving beauty becomes the basis of a set of highly skilful variations in the second movement. The work concludes with a rondo in which the main themes of the first movement are repeated in free-variation form.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Concerto for Orchestra*

Bartók was commissioned to write this composition by the Koussevitzky Foundation. Completed in 1943, it was introduced by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Serge Koussevitzky on December 1, 1945.

The writing of a "concerto for orchestra" suggests music of the past rather than the future. The composer has explained that he has called it concerto because it treats instrumental groups in a soloistic manner. Bartók further revealed that this work marked an emergence from pessimism. In its melodic vitality and rich scoring it does, indeed, speak of an affirmation rather than negation of life. It is in four closely-knit movements, the last of which is vertiginous Hungarian music of folk character. The work opens with a prelude of a somewhat melancholy character, the principal theme of which is stated at once by the strings. This mood of melancholy is, however, soon dissipated by a vivacious Scherzo. The third movement, while deeply reflective, has no suggestion of pessimism, but is a poetic document in one of Bartók's most deeply introspective veins.

# BERNSTEIN

LEONARD BERNSTEIN, b. Lawrence, Mass., 1918. Was graduated from Harvard University in 1939 where he majored in music; then, for two years, attended the Curtis Institute of Music, a pupil of Fritz Reiner, Randall Thompson and Vengerova. After additional study of conducting with Koussevitzky, he served his baton apprenticeship at the Berkshire Music Center and in Boston. Appointed assistant conductor of the Philharmonic Symphony Society of New York, he made a successful début with that organization in 1943. He has since that time directed most of the famous orchestras of America. He has proved his versatility as a composer by writing both serious music and music in the popular vein; in the latter category belongs his score to the successful Broadway musical show, *On the Town*.

## SYMPHONY

### *Jeremiah Symphony*

WITH this work, which was selected by the Music Critics Circle as the outstanding new work of the 1943-44 season, Leonard Bernstein proved himself as talented creatively as he was in the field of conducting. It is abundant in ideas, spacious in design, moving in fervor. As the work of a young man in his 'twenties, it is, indeed, an amazing production. While the music has a tendency towards overwriting, it is inherently powerful, honest, with many moments (especially in the last movement) of eloquence.

Mr. Bernstein has provided the following information about his symphony: "In the summer of 1939, I made a sketch for a Lamentation for Soprano and Orchestra. This sketch lay forgotten for two years, until in the spring of 1942 I began a first movement of a symphony. I then realized that this new movement, and the Scherzo that I planned to follow it, made logical concomitants with the Lamentation. Thus the Symphony came into being, with the Lamentation greatly changed, and the soprano supplanted by a mezzo-soprano. The work was finished on December 31, 1942, and is dedicated to my father.

"The Symphony does not make use to any great extent of actual Hebrew thematic material. The first theme of the Scherzo is paraphrased from a traditional Hebrew chant, and the opening phrase of the vocal part in the Lamentation is based on a liturgical cadence still sung today in commemoration of the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon. Other resemblances to Hebrew liturgical music are a matter of emotional quality rather than of the notes themselves.

"As for programmatic meanings, the intention is again not one of literalness, but of emotional quality. Thus the first movement (*Prophecy*) aims only to parallel in feeling the intensity of the prophet's pleas with his people; and the Scherzo (*Profanation*) to give a general sense of the destruction and chaos brought on by the pagan corruption within the priesthood and the people. The third movement (*Lamentation*) being a setting of poetic text, is naturally



a more literary conception. It is the cry of Jeremiah, as he mourns his beloved Jerusalem, ruined, pillaged, and dishonored after his desperate effort to save it. The text is from the Book of Lamentations, I, 1, 2, 3, 4; IV, 14 and 15; V, 20 and 21. An approximate translation follows:

How she sits desolate—  
The city once so full of people,—  
She is become as a widow!  
So great among the nations,  
Princess among the provinces,  
She has become a tributary!  
She weeps, she weeps in the night,  
And her tears are upon her cheeks;

There is no comfort among all her lovers;  
All her friends have betrayed her,  
They have become her enemies,  
Judah is exiled through affliction  
And great servitude;  
She dwells among the nations,  
She finds no rest;  
All her pursuers have overtaken her  
In the narrow passes.

Jerusalem has sinned, sinned greatly. . . .”

Recommended recording: VM-1026 (St. Louis Symphony; Nan Merriman—Bernstein).

# BRITTEN

## OPERA

### *Peter Grimes*

**I**N two acts, libretto by Montagu Slater, based upon the poem *The Borough* by George Crabbe, first presented at the Sadler's Wells Theatre, London, on June 7, 1945.

Commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation for performance at the summer Berkshire Festival at Tanglewood, in Lenox, Mass., *Peter Grimes* was nevertheless first introduced not in this country but in London. The theater in which it was housed, Sadler's Wells, had been closed since the Blitz of 1940, when a rain of German bombs interrupted a performance of *Faust*. Its reopening, and the première of a new opera—the first new opera

heard in London in ten years—combined to make a gala event. And the opera rose to the occasion. A sombre and almost brutally realistic work, it was found to be forceful and gripping, with a highly imaginative and original score. There was a five-minute ovation after the première. The opera was repeated twelve times that season, and was heard also in Basle, Paris, Stockholm, and Antwerp. The American première took place at the Berkshire Festival at Tanglewood during the summer of 1946. Previously, five interludes from the opera had been heard at the concerts of the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Koussevitzky.

Peter Grimes is a lonely fisherman who has been hardened by the misunderstanding of his neighbors. Feeling himself persecuted, he turns to persecuting others. Engaging an orphan to work for him, Peter Grimes first enslaves him, and then kills him with abuse. "In the course of the two acts," a reviewer wrote in the *London Musical Times*, "which pass outside and inside an inn by the shore, dislike and suspicion grow to a storm. We see how the folk, with all their antagonisms, are of one mind when Peter approaches. There are two who understand him. One is a retired sea-captain named Balstrode, the other a widowed school-mistress, Ellen Orford. Peter would marry her some day when his trade prospers; but her pity and sympathy enrage him and are rewarded by a blow. When Peter engages another boy-apprentice the storm grows—murder once, murder again? An angry procession starts off to see what is going on in Peter's dark, lonely dwelling at the top of a cliff. At its approach he flees to his boat by the cliff way, and the boy slips and dies. It is now all up with Peter. There is a hue and cry, which he evades in the dark and the fog. When he creeps into the village street, finished and awaiting discovery, Balstrode tells him to sail far out and sink his boat. So Peter goes out to his death."

## COPLAND

### BALLET

#### *Appalachian Spring*

**A**ARON COPLAND composed the score for this ballet in 1943-44, on a commission from the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation for the dancer, Martha Graham. Its première took place at the Coolidge Festival in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., on October 30, 1944; the performers were, of course, Martha Graham and her company. In 1945, *Appalachian Spring* won the Pulitzer Prize for music, and was selected by the Music Critics Circle of New York as the outstanding theatrical work of the season.

Mr. Copland has provided the following information about this work:

"The music of the ballet takes as its point of departure the personality of Martha Graham. I have long been an admirer of Miss Graham's work. She, in turn, must have felt a certain affinity for my music because in 1931 she chose my Piano Variations as background for a dance composition entitled *Dithyramb*. . . . Ever since then, at long intervals, Miss Graham and I planned to collaborate on a stage work. Nothing might have come of our intentions if it were not for the lucky chance that brought Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge to a Graham performance for the first time early in 1942. With typical energy, Mrs. Coolidge translated her enthusiasm into action. She invited Martha Graham to create three new ballets for the 1943 annual fall festival of the Coolidge Foundation in Washington, and commissioned three composers—Paul Hindemith, Darius Milhaud and myself—to compose scores especially for the occasion.

"After considerable delay Miss Graham sent me an untitled script. I suggested certain changes to which she made no serious objections. . . . The title *Appalachian Spring* was chosen by Miss Graham. She borrowed it from the heading of one of Hart Crane's poems, though the ballet bears no relation to the text of the poem itself."

The scene of the ballet takes place in the Pennsylvania hills in the early part of the last century. It is Spring, and a "pioneer" celebration is taking place, in honor of the marriage of a farmer to his beloved. They regard their future with hope and apprehension. A neighbor brings them confidence with his own experiences. A revivalist and his followers remind the newlyweds of the strange aspects of human fate. The ballet ends peacefully, as the newly married pair prepare to face their future in their new household with confidence.

Virgil Thomson described Copland's music as "pastoral," in style, "blithe and beatific." Copland, who drew from folk-lore sources, built a skilful score, rich in atmosphere, homely in instrumentation, imaginative in treatment.

The original scoring of the ballet was for thirteen instruments. In 1915, Copland set to work to prepare a suite for large orchestra. This was introduced by the New York Philharmonic under Artur Rodzinski on October 7, 1945, and has since been performed by most of our major orchestras.

Mr. Copland explains: "The Suite contains the following sections. played without interruption:

(1) *Very slowly*—Introduction of the characters, one by one, in a suffused light.

(2) *Fast*—Sudden burst of unison strings in A major arpeggios starts the action. A sentiment both elated and religious gives the keynote to this scene.

(3) *Moderate*—Duo for the Bride and her Intended—scene of tenderness and passion.

(4) *Quite fast*—The Revivalist and his flock. Folksy feelings—suggestions of square dances and country fiddlers.

(5) *Still faster*—Solo dance of the Bride—Presentiment of motherhood. Extremes of joy and fear and wonder.

(6) *Very slowly* (as at first)—Transition scene to music reminiscent of the introduction.

(7) *Calm and flowing*—Scenes of daily activity for the Bride and her Farmer-husband. There are five variations on a Shaker theme. The theme—sung by solo clarinet—was taken from a collection of Shaker melodies compiled by Edward D. Andrews, and published under the title *The Gift to be Simple*. The melody, which I borrowed and used almost literally, is called *Simple Gifts*. It has this text:

'Tis the gift to be simple,  
'Tis the gift to be free,  
'Tis the gift to come down  
Where we ought to be.

And when we find ourselves  
In the place just right  
'Twill be in the valley  
Of love and delight.

When true simplicity is gain'd,  
To bow and to bend we shan't be asham'd.  
To turn, turn will be our delight,  
'Till by turning, turning we come round right.

(8) *Moderate*—Coda—The Bride takes her place among her neighbors. At the end the couple are left 'quiet and strong in their new house.' Muted strings intone a hushed prayer-like passage. The close is reminiscent of the opening music."

Recommended recording: *Orchestral Suite*, VM-1046 (Boston Symphony—Koussevitzky).

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *A Lincoln Portrait*

Soon after Pearl Harbor, the orchestral conductor, André Kostelanetz, commissioned several American composers to write short orchestral works glorifying outstanding Americans. Copland, one of the composers thus approached, intended to write a piece about Walt Whitman, but he was persuaded by Kostelanetz to change his subject from a literary figure to a political one.

Here is what Mr. Copland has to say about this work: "In discussing my choice with Virgil Thomson, he amiably pointed out that no composer could possibly hope to match in musical terms the stature of so eminent a figure as that of Lincoln. Of course, he was quite right. But secretly I was hoping to avoid the difficulty of doing a portrait in which the sitter himself might speak.

With the voice of Lincoln to help me I was ready to risk the impossible.

"The letters and speeches of Lincoln supplied the text. It was comparatively a simple matter to choose a few excerpts that seemed particularly apposite to our own situation today. I avoided the temptation to use only well-known passages, permitting myself the luxury of quoting only once from a world-famous speech. The order and arrangement of the selections are my own.

"The first sketches were made in February and the portrait was finished on April 16th. The orchestration was completed a few weeks later. I worked with musical materials of my own, with the exception of two songs of the period: the famous *Camptown Races* and a ballad that was first published in 1840 under the title *The Pesky Serpent* but is better known today as *Springfield Mountain*. In neither case is the treatment a literal one. The tunes are used freely, in the manner of my use of cowboy songs in *Billy the Kid*.

"The composition is roughly divided into three main sections. In the opening section I wanted to suggest something of the mysterious sense of fatality that surrounds Lincoln's personality. Also, near the end of that section, something of his gentleness and simplicity of spirit. The quick middle section briefly sketches in the background of the times he lived in. This merges into the concluding section where my sole purpose was to draw a simple but impressive frame about the words of Lincoln himself."

Recommended recording: CM-X266 (Philharmonic Symphony—Rodzinski; Spencer).

## CRESTON

PAUL CRESTON, b. New York, 1906. Studied music with Aldo Randegger, Gaston Dethier, Pietro Yon, but was virtually self-taught in composition, harmony and counterpoint. In 1932, he decided to make composing his profession, and since that time he has been awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship twice, the Citation of Merit from the National Association of American Composers and Conductors, a grant from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the Ditson Fund Award. He has served on the staff of the Blue Network and has served as organist at St. Malachy's Church in New York.

PAUL CRESTON has what Virgil Thomson calls "musical abundance." He writes fully and opulently—his works are replete with ideas, some of them engagingly fetching. His music makes pleasurable listening not only because it is unusually lyrical and caters to the ear, but because it is so beautifully constructed and delights the intellect. What Olin Downes wrote of Creston's First Symphony serves admirably to analyze Creston's style in his best works: They are characterized by "clear-cut, straightforward musical thinking"; by "balance of lyrical, rhythmical, and contrapuntal elements; the general skillfulness and sound-worthiness of the instrumentation"; by a style which does not "ride to death some technical theory, form, or formula."

## SYMPHONIES

*Symphony No. 1*

Creston's First Symphony, Op. 20, was selected by the New York Music Critics Circle as the most important new work by an American to have been introduced during the 1942-1943 concert season. It was completed in January, 1940.

The four movements of the symphony are entitled: I. With Majesty; II. With Humor; III. With Serenity; IV. With Gaiety.

Mr. Creston has provided the following analysis for his symphony: "The opening movement is in free sonata-allegro form, the thematic material of which is presented in two distinct sections. Within the first six measures are announced three separate motives, rhythmic and vigorous in character, comprising the first group of themes; at measure 16 is presented the contrasting lyric theme. During the development of this material the themes are intertwined, combined, fugally treated and varied in many ways, and at times change their initial aspects so that the rhythmic themes become lyric and the lyric becomes dramatic.

"The second movement is a scherzo in 3/4 meter. Rhythm is the reigning element with overlapping and subdivisional patterns abounding throughout. The middle section is cast in a lyric vein, but the rhythmic aspect of the movement is maintained in the alternating figure played by the 'cellos and basses.

"In the third movement the 'cellos present in its complete form the main theme, which was suggested in the introduction by muted strings. The oboe takes up this theme and develops it differently. This leads to the second theme which is passed from flute to clarinet to oboe to bassoon to trumpet, each time varied. After the climax, the movement returns to its original serenity with muted strings.

"The final movement is based on two themes, the first being again subdivided into two sections; one presented at the opening by the oboe and the other by the clarinet in the 9th measure. The second theme is presented by the brass choir in chordal structure. No new material is introduced at any time during the movement. Each time the first theme appears it does so in a different texture, is varied, and is treated in a different style. The conclusion presents a fragment of the second theme in augmentation with a fragment of the first against it."

*Symphony No. 2*

Paul Creston conceived his Second Symphony, Op. 35, as "an apotheosis of the two foundations of all music: song and dance."

His analysis of this symphony follows:

"In the opening of the Introduction are presented four themes as a cumulative ground bass, i.e., successively superimposed. Theme 1, played by 'cellos, and Theme 2, played by violas, are the main bases of the entire sym-

phony. Whatever new thematic material emerges is either a ramification or a development of these two themes.

"The Song is largely built on a variation of Theme 1, tender and simple in character, presented first by the flute and then by the horn. After a minor climax, the inversion of Theme 1 is presented by violins and is followed by Theme 2, with the mood gradually increasing in intensity. A short, agitated episode leads to the varied Theme 1 with the whole orchestra participating and played with great breadth and majesty. The movement closes quietly with the original flute theme, this time played by the oboe, slightly varied rhythmically but equally tender and simple in feeling.

"The Interlude opens with a completely transformed Theme 1, quite aggressive and defiant, leading to a rather quiet section, but soon returning to the aggressive character. This last merges into the Dance without pause, which after a rhythmic introduction begins with another variation of Theme 1 (muted trumpet). Each appearance of the variation of Theme 1 alters further the rhythm and contour of the melody. As the excitement mounts, Theme 2 soars above the ever-recurrent rhythmic pulses, developing to a climax and into the next section of the Dance. In the second section, based on a variation of Theme 1 inverted, the rhythmic pattern has changed and there is a greater sense of driving forward. . . . Above three concurrent rhythms which were presented separately earlier in the Dance, the flute theme of the Song (now played by the violins), becoming more and more intense, brings the composition to a close."

Creston completed this Symphony in June, 1944, and on February 15, 1945 it was introduced by the New York Philharmonic Symphony Society under the direction of Artur Rodzinski. Mr. Downes found this work to possess "much variety of orchestral coloring as well as of rhythmic effect. Fine workmanship is evident throughout."

The symphony is dedicated to Dr. William Filler, family friend and physician, "in profound gratitude."

# GRUENBERG

## CONCERTO

### *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*

IN his Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 47, Mr. Gruenberg made a calculated attempt to write an authentically American concerto. Within his second movement (marked "With Simplicity and Humor") he incorporated several bars of two Negro Spirituals; while the third movement ("Lively and with Good Humor") imitates a hill-billy fiddler and a small-town religious revival meeting. Only in the first movement, "Rhapsodie," are there no folk-lore interpolations; here the writing is along expansive lines and American personality is suggested through the dash and power of the themes and the spaciousness of the form.

Gruenberg was commissioned by Jascha Heifetz to write this concerto. Completed on August 7, 1944, it was introduced by the famous violinist on December 1, 1944 at the concerts of the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy.

The story goes that, during the writing of this work, Heifetz offered the composer advice on some of the technical phases of writing for the violin. However, when the work was completed, Heifetz complained that it was very difficult to perform. The composer's answer was: "What of it? Aren't you Heifetz?"

# HANSON

## SYMPHONIES

### *Symphony No. 3*

### *Symphony No. 4*

DR. HANSON explains that "temperamentally the Third Symphony is more closely related to the First than to the Second. The Third Symphony springs definitely from the north, and has its genesis in the composer's reverence for the spiritual contribution that has been made to America by the sturdy race of northern pioneers who as early as 1638 founded the first Swedish settlement on the Delaware, and who were in later centuries to constitute such a mighty force in conquering the West."

A description of this symphony is provided by Dr. Hanson: "The first



movement, which has the subtitle *Andante lamentando—agitato* is both rugged and turbulent in character, alternating with a religious mysticism. The second movement, *Andante tranquillo*, is, as its name implies, for the most part peaceful and brooding in quality. The third movement, *Tempo scherzando*, is in the tempo of a fast scherzo, and is vigorous and rhythmic. The fourth movement, marked *Largamente e pesante*, begins with the brooding character of the first movement, developing into an extended chorale in antiphonal style, rising to a climax in the full orchestra out of which appears the principal theme of the second movement, the Symphony ending on a note of exultation and rejoicing."

The Symphony was commissioned by the Columbia Broadcasting System, and three movements of it were given their world première over that network on September 19, 1937, the composer conducting. The complete symphony was introduced by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, also under the composer's direction, on November 3, 1938.

The Fourth Symphony, an elegiac work, is inscribed "in memory of my beloved father." It derives the titles of its four movements from the Requiem Mass: Kyrie; Requiescat; Dies Irae; and Lux Aeterna. The work has been described by William Bergsma as "a highly personal and emotional expression, concise and highly elided, taking barely twenty minutes to perform. The four movements can be characterized briefly: the first is a turbulent and varied movement, a Kyrie theme alternating with dance and song-like sections, and a chorale statement preceding a stormy coda. The second is a simple and tender treatment of a scale-like theme in eighth-notes, given a first statement in a solo bassoon. The third is a furious and bitter 'scherzo.' The last, a pastorale with stormy interpolations, has a simple 2/4 ending, dying off on the second inversion of a major triad."

The Symphony was introduced by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, directed by Hanson, on December 3, 1943. In 1944, the symphony became the first to win the Pulitzer Prize.

# HARRIS

## SYMPHONY

### *Symphony No. 6*

ROY HARRIS has always had a great admiration for Abraham Lincoln. In seeking to write a symphony expressive of the great global struggle of the Second World War, he turned for his inspiration to Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

Harris has provided the following explanation for his symphony: "The first movement, entitled 'Awakening,' reflects the opening words of the President's speech. . . . The second movement, 'Conflict,' recalls the following reference to the war: 'Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation—or any nation, so conceived and so dedicated—can long endure.' The third movement, 'Dedication,' is a long chorale of dedication to the dead: 'We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place of those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. . . .' The fourth movement, 'Affirmation,' is fugal in form and reflects in architectural terms the mood of strong faith in mankind that rings in the last paragraph of the Gettysburg speech."

The Symphony was commissioned by the Blue Network in May, 1945, and was performed several months later by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Serge Koussevitzky.

# KABALEVSKY

DIMITRI KABALEVSKY, b. St. Petersburg (now Leningrad), 1904. His musical studies took place first at the Scriabin State College of Music, then at the Moscow Conservatory. His professional career as a musician started with teaching, but was soon supplemented by his creative work.

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

### *Overture to Colas Breugnon*

*Colas Breugnon* is an opera based on Romain Rolland's famous novel of the same name but freely adapted for operatic purposes by the librettist, V. Bragin. The central figure of the opera is Colas himself, a man who has been described by one writer, as possessing a "rich, laughing philosophy of life,

wise, salty humor . . . wit . . . fire . . . pride in his craft . . . cunning . . . sturdy bearing of misfortune."

The opera itself was introduced in Leningrad at the State Opera Theater early in 1938. Subsequently, the composer prepared an orchestral suite of pieces drawn from the opera; one of these, the one most widely known in this country, is the Overture.

The Overture is essentially a swift portrait in tone of the character, Colas Breugnon. When Rolland gave Kabalevsky permission to prepare an opera on his novel, he admonished him not to take the theme too seriously. "Colas without laughter won't be Colas," Rolland said. There is the element of warmth, gaiety and laughter, throughout the overture—infectious music which wins affection even on the first hearing.

The Overture was performed in this country for the first time at the Ravinia Festival under Efrem Kurtz on July 22, 1943.

Recommended Recording: CM-585 (Pittsburgh Symphony—Reiner).

## SYMPHONY

### *Symphony No. 2*

Kabalevsky's Second Symphony, Op. 19, was composed in 1934, and introduced on December 25 of that year by Albert Coates conducting the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra. Its American première took place on November 8, 1942, when Arturo Toscanini performed it with the NBC Symphony. Since then, it has had repeated performances and has become one of the favored symphonies in the modern repertory.

In three movements, the work has a cumulative power which builds to a magnificent climax appearing towards the close of the final movement. It has none of the laughter and lightness of the *Colas Breugnon* overture, but is throughout a work of dramatic intensity, passion, excitement. Yet it has its gentler moods as well. The second movement (*Andante non troppo*) is beautifully melodic, opening with an exquisite section for flute and progressing with a fulsome song for the entire orchestra.

# Khatchaturian

ARAM KHATCHATOURIAN, Armenian composer, b. Tiflis, 1903. His study of music began late, when he was nineteen, his first important teacher being Gnissin. Subsequently study took place at the Moscow Conservatory with Miaskovsky and Vassilenko. He began composing almost as soon as he had learned the rudiments, and in a few years achieved considerable popularity in the Soviet Union, scoring his first great success with his Symphony, written in 1934.

## CONCERTO

### *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*

THIS concerto, which has achieved quite a vogue in the symphony halls in the past few seasons, was composed in 1935, and was first heard in this country on March 14, 1942 at the Juilliard School of Music. The soloist was Maro Ajemian, and the conductor Albert Stoessel.

When the concerto was introduced in New York at the concerts of the New York Philharmonic, the critic Louis Biancolli wrote:

"In reviewing the concerto, Soviet critics were especially enthusiastic about the slow movement, a poetic reverie in *romanza*-style. Georgi Khubov, writing in *Sovietskaya Musika* in September, 1939, regarded it as an epitome of modern lyricism, with its perfect inner harmony, its vitality, and its folk character. Throughout, the Orientalism is easily recognized in the structure of the melodies used, with the stress on small intervals in eight-note and nine-note scales. Another feature evocative of the Orient is the contrast and novelty of color applied in the scoring for woodwinds.

"Suggestive of Borodin—and Liszt for that matter—are not only the sweep and surge of theme, but the thematic unity of structure. Material first expounded in the opening movement returns with redoubled force in the finale. In fact, the rather festive, animated theme, with the typically Armenian cadence, introduced in the opening allegro, dominates the concerto like a cyclic motif. The exotic, *romanza*-like effect of the andante is achieved through a combination of fresh harmonies, folk mood, and laconic expression, the whole giving an impression of severe simplicity. The andante contrasts sharply with the often theatrical brilliance of the end movements."

# PROKOFIEV

## SONATA

### *Sonata No. 7*

PROKOFIEV composed three sonatas for piano inspired by the Second World War, and the most famous of these is the Seventh, which won the Stalin Prize as one of the most original Russian compositions written in 1942. The sonata was introduced in the United States by Vladimir Horowitz in 1945, when it was acclaimed as one of the most significant contributions of our time to piano literature. The following is a brief analysis of this sonata found in the *RCA Victor Record Review*: "Filled with rhythmic and harmonic surprise, the opening movement begins Allegro Inquieto and immediately proceeds to alternate with a secondary theme, an Andantino. In this initial movement, Prokofiev's economy of means is particularly apparent. The thematic material at his disposal provides him innumerable delicate intricacies, all of which he handles with consummate mastery. The second movement of the sonata, like the customary slow movements of classical fame, opens on a romantic note of warm subtlety. The theme is simple, song-like, and upon it are played a series of sonorous variations mounting gradually to a clashing bell-like climax. Then the music subsides once again as if worn out by the excess of its ardor, the opening theme returns in all its tender gravity and the last notes fade away in a whisper."

Recommended recording: VM-1042 (Horowitz).

## SYMPHONY

### *Fifth Symphony*

Few modern symphonies have been received with such an outburst of enthusiasm as Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony, Op. 100. Serge Koussevitzky, who introduced the work in this country in November, 1945, described it as one of the greatest symphonies of our generation; and to convince music lovers of that fact, he performed it not only in Boston and over the radio, but also in New York, twice in one season. The critics echoed the conductor's enthusiasm to a great degree. They declared that this work was more spacious than other Prokofiev symphonies, and that it sounded a new note for the composer: a Brahmsian sweep and passion, an elegiac tenderness and introspection.

Prokofiev had been gathering material for this symphony for many years, but the entire score was written in one month during the summer of 1944. It took another month for the orchestration and on January 13, 1945, it was introduced in Moscow under the baton of the composer.

Although Prokofiev insists that the symphony is without a program, he has added vaguely that the work is about "the spirit of man." Undoubtedly,

Prokofiev was powerfully affected by the momentous events in his country in 1944, that turned the tide of the war in the East and assured victory for the Soviet forces. There is tragedy in the second movement of the music, but there is exhilaration and triumph as well, particularly in the stirring close.

Noel Straus said of this symphony: "Here Prokofiev comes to grips with humanity in its tremendous struggle, and does so with telling sympathy in music of extraordinary vitality. Not suffering and sorrow dominate the work, however, but the sense of power felt by his race and the overwhelming joy experienced in its realization of certain victory over its foes and the forces of evil."

# SHOSTAKOVICH

## SYMPHONIES

### *Symphony No. 6*

### *Symphony No. 8*

SHOSTAKOVICH originally planned his Sixth Symphony, Op. 54, as a monumental tribute to Lenin, with vocal passages for chorus and soloists set to poems by peasant poets. But for one reason or another, the Lenin idea was discarded and when it was finished in 1939, it emerged as a symphony for orchestra alone and without any definite program. It was introduced in Moscow on December 3, 1939 during a two-month Festival of Soviet Music and, strange to say, failed to make much of an impression. Its introduction in this country took place on November 29, 1940 by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Stokowski. In this country, the symphony has vied in popularity with the composer's First and Fifth.

The symphony is in three movements, opening rather unorthodoxly with a broad Largo, a noble slow movement of great feeling. A gay Scherzo changes the mood from the somber to the gay and the last movement, a Rondo, is in Shostakovich's best satirical style.

In the Eighth Symphony, first performed in this country on April 2, 1944 by the New York Philharmonic under Rodzinski, Shostakovich attempted a glimpse into the future, the post-war world. "He spoke of its ideological and philosophical conception," explains Grigori Shneerson in the *Moscow News*, "being expressed in the words 'All that is evil and ugly will disappear and beauty will triumph.' If we regard the Symphony from this aspect, we will see how Shostakovich by his very nature sets off in its own pure light the 'beautiful' from the 'heavy, sombre shadows of the ugly and the evil' until he

achieves out of the blackness of Dante's *Inferno* the radiant glory of the future. Shostakovich gives a stirringly tragic picture from the present grim and majestic drama of peoples suffering from 'blood, sweat and tears.' "

The Symphony is in five movements: Adagio; Allegretto (a march); Allegro non troppo (a march); Largo (a passacaglia) and Allegretto (a pastorale). The last three movements are played without interruption.

Recommended recording: Symphony No. 6, CM-585 (Pittsburgh Symphony—Reiner).

# STRAVINSKY

## SYMPHONY

### *Symphony in Three Movements*

THIS work may be said to be the third of Stravinsky's symphonies for orchestra. The first he wrote in 1905-1906 (E-flat major), and dedicated to his teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov. He did not write his second symphony, in C major, until thirty-five years later, and it was introduced on January 17, 1941 by the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by the composer himself. Stravinsky's third symphony—and in the opinion of many critics—his greatest, was given its première on January 24, 1946 by the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra directed by the composer.

In his analysis of this symphony for the valuable program notes issued by the New York Philharmonic, Ingolf Dahl points out that in his new symphony Stravinsky "has moved on to the exact opposite of traditional symphonic form." Mr. Dahl reveals that in the new work there is no sonata form, no development of principal thematic material. Instead, there is found what Mr. Dahl describes as the "additive construction" which Stravinsky himself has evolved. This consists in a "formal principle which conceives of music as the younger succession of clearly outlined blocks, or planes, which are unified and related through the continuity of a steadily and logically evolving organic force."

The symphony is in three movements: Allegro; Andante; Con Moto. The first movement is described by Mr. Dahl as toccata in form, the "weightiest of the three, both in size and content." The second movement is a "delicate intermezzo." The final movement opens with "an introduction of psalmic elevation," and "sets the scene for three distinct sections which could be classified either as 'variations', as this term is understood in the ballet, or as preludes to the final fugue."

















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